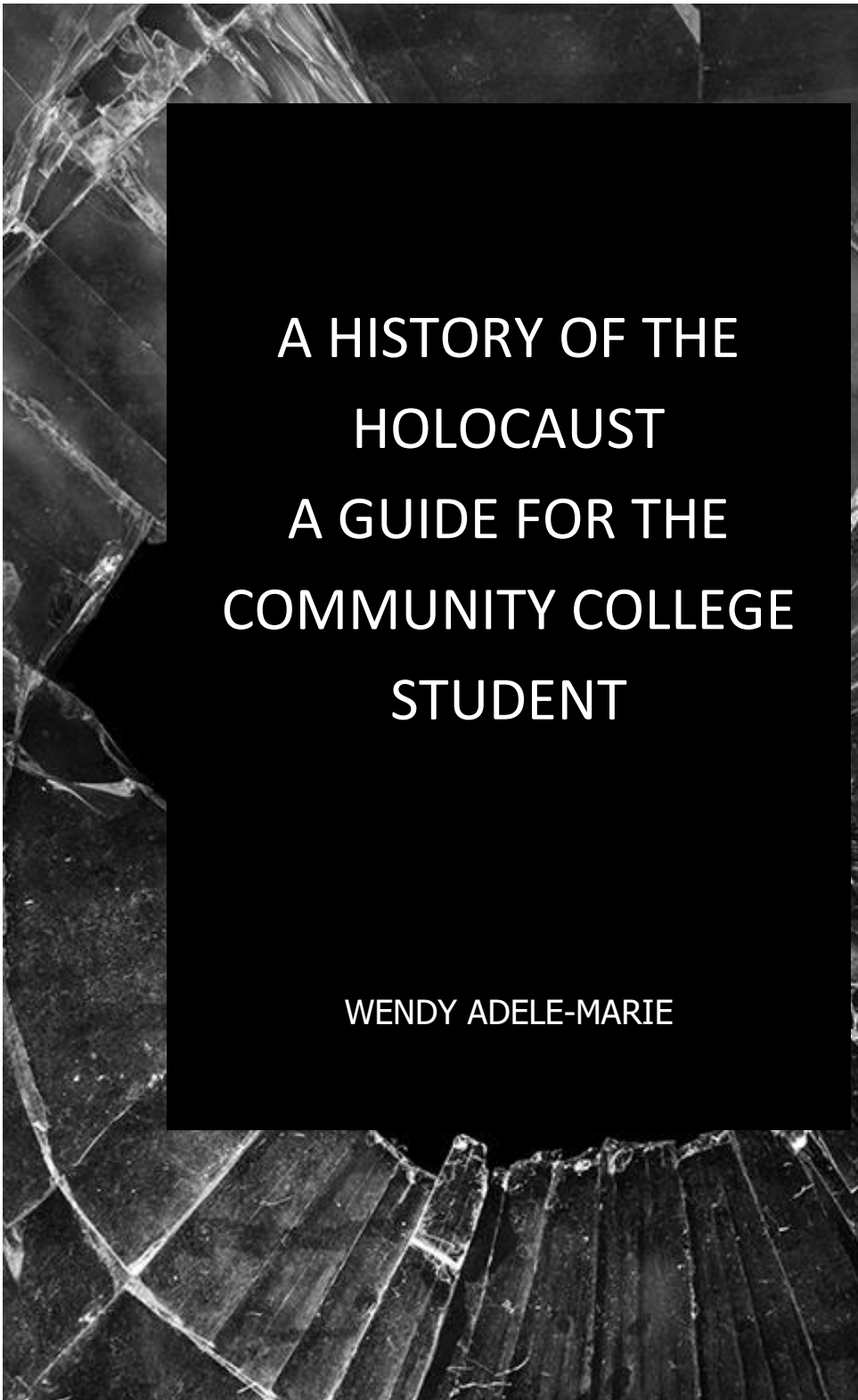

A HISTORY OF THE HOLOCAUST A GUIDE FOR THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT

WENDY ADELE-MARIE

A HISTORY OF THE HOLOCAUST: A GUIDE FOR THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT

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Dedications

This textbook is in honor of Magda Brown, Yakov Zakon, and Philip Drell. I miss you all very much.

The entire project is especially dedicated to Leon Stein, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Roosevelt University, whose guidance and instruction made my work as a Holocaust scholar and professor possible. You believed in me first as an undergraduate, then as a graduate student, and then as a professor. I thank you for your training, and for the gift of your knowledge and instruction in Holocaust and genocide studies. I learned from the very best.

Dedicated to the other survivors that I have had the honor of knowing throughout my life, thank you all for making this work possible. Diana, when I was a very little girl, you gave me a book on Corrie ten Boom and told me that there will always be good people in the world. You also told me never to apologize for standing up against hate and injustice. Ava, you once told me to dance through the raindrops; this book is also for you. To Stella, I am so grateful to your advice, friendship, and your many kindnesses. To Yvonne and Ralph, I am grateful to both of you for being such good friends to me, and always supporting my students.

To all of my students, past, present, and future: this book is for you. Thank you for being a part of my work at Oakton. All of you inspired me to create this project, and for that, I am eternally appreciative.

Finally, to my beautiful grandparents Marie and Francis. Thank you for always encouraging me to reach for the stars, the moon, and the sun.

Acknowledgements

I want to thank Oakton Community College and President Joi Smith for granting me this opportunity of a sabbatical to complete this project. I also thank my dean, Linda Korbel, for her support. Thank you to the Sabbatical Committee for believing in this project.

I am grateful to be a professor at Oakton and to be able to serve our community in some small way through this OER.

A thank you to all of my colleagues who contributed to this book.

I am especially indebted to Adam Yunis for volunteering to compile an index for this text. He also assisted with the editing process. As a graduate student, Adam's help throughout this entire process cannot be underestimated. From start to finish, Adam was a critical part of this project. Adam and I emailed dozens of times, bouncing ideas around, and debating topics. When one author dropped out days before the deadline, Adam stepped up and filled in that critical gap. I learned from his student's perspective and am humbly reminded that education is never finite. His essays were a critical component to the OER, and for his scholarship, patience, and eye for detail, I am grateful.

I must also thank my friend Brian D. Naimola for proofing the entire manuscript and providing editorial comments and corrections. Brian's assistance with proofreading the OER was a tremendous gift, and I am thankful for the hours he volunteered to help.

I am especially in debt to my friend Heather Klain at Holocaust Community Services.

To my dear friends Wini and Robi Drell … thank you for being there and for your generosity towards my students and me. Philip had a tremendous impact on students when he came to speak at Oakton, and I work to keep his legacy alive in my US History and

Holocaust classes, as you know from Ameen's tribute. I thank you both for allowing me to use his images in this text.

I recognize my anonymous reviewer who looked over the essays and made suggestions for inclusion, omission, and correction. I am humbled by the generosity shown to me and this project.

I thank my dear friend Katie for revising an essay that was especially important to this project.

I also thank Talia Langman at the ADL and Sherry Bard at Echoes & Reflections for their guidance and generosity in allowing me to reference resources.

The USHMM was also crucial for my research, and I thank my friend Chelsea Halling-Nye for her contributions.

For Danny M. Cohen, and from whom his advice, friendship, and expertise have benefited both myself and countless Oakton students, I remain forever grateful.

I acknowledge and thank NARA, who make sources available for free use, such as the Eisenhower letter and the pink triangle badge.

My gratitude to Kelley Szany, Vice President of Education and Exhibitions, Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, for allowing the reprinting of an important speech she gave on an upstander that Adam Yunis authored.

I am grateful to Robin Throne, Ph.D., whose expertise and support towards a qualitative approach in writing shaped this project. I also thank Gregory Mullins, Ed.D., for his influence on the shaping of understanding pseudo-transformational leadership and the dangers of authority.

I must acknowledge the influence that historian Donald L. Niewyk has had on me as a scholar. From as an undergraduate, first reading his critical work *The Holocaust: Problems and Perspective of*

Interpretation, to assigning it to my students, his writings have had a major influence on me. It is a dedication to him and his work that this book attempted to emulate. My twist on his approach was that I wanted to welcome my former students to contribute to this textbook as I argue that academia and publishing must be more inclusive, no matter what stage of the academic journey one is on. I am so very honored of what my student contributors Ameen, Ellie, Emily, and Sarah, all proud Oakton alumni, accomplished. They took on the challenge of authoring a piece for this OER and they all did such an amazing job with their respective works.

Sherrill Weaver's advice on OER and Creative Commons was an enormous help, and I am incredibly grateful to her for her work on licensing.

I thank all the guest contributors, whose donation of their critical scholarship, first-hand accounts, and other works greatly enhanced this unique book in a way that could not have been done otherwise. I am incredibly appreciative of you all.

The opinions expressed by the guest contributors are their own.

Should anything come to your attention that needs correction, please let me know. No matter how many times I read this book, there were changes, which again, is reflective of the organic beauty of an OER, which can be adjusted and adapted as needed.

I finally must again acknowledge every one of my students at Oakton Community College who have either taken my Holocaust class or took another class with me, and the topic of World War Two, Nazi Germany, or the Holocaust came up. Our class discussions inspired me to take this challenge on and for that, I am grateful.

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Warning: I must caution the reader that many of the chapters below contain potentially very triggering and graphic details of abuse, child abuse, mass atrocities, experiments on humans, gassings and shootings, torture, rape, murder, war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and gendercide.

Foreword

In Shadows of Shadows

Danny M. Cohen

I am 17. I stand at the entrance of the archives at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial and museum in Jerusalem. From her desk, an archivist looks up at me. "I'm looking for my family," I say. My heart is racing. The archivist lets out a cynical laugh. "You'll never find them."

I never met my Grandpa Maurice. A Jewish survivor of Nazi-occupied Holland, he died when my mother was a young girl. And yet he is always with me; my middle name is Maurice. I am 9. I ask my mother to tell me the names of her great-grandparents. She doesn't know. The gaps in my family's history create a mirrored silence inside of me. This is an inherited obstruction, as if certain questions must be swallowed rather than spoken.

"Auschwitz is a must-see," my friend says, after a trip to Poland, as if having experienced some kind of Holocaust epiphany. I am 20 and I have no interest in visiting Auschwitz, or any site of Nazi atrocity. The idea terrifies me. I imagine myself inside

deteriorating gas chambers. I don't want to be suffocated by the sight of disintegrating piles of human hair. I don't want that feeling of profound horror or numbing defeat. I don't want to stand where my people—or any people—or my family—choked to death. I don't want to be seen trying to make sense of what can never be understood, or to feel obliged to pray or to sing or to be judged if I can't burst into tears along with everyone else. I've become frightened of the ghosts of my grandfather's family. Surely, they'll only recognize me as a disrespectful tourist, queuing for that critically acclaimed attraction, that thrill-ride at Birkenau.

I knew my grandfather through a handful of photographs. The hand-me-down memories I have of him include a list of unrelated facts and anecdotes. I am 11. I stare at photographs of Grandpa on his wedding day. I know he went bald. I learn how to pronounce his unusual Dutch surname, *Ziekenoppasser*. I overhear pieces of his story, whispered at family events, when the adults think I'm not listening. My grandfather had escaped Nazi-Europe before the rest of his family—all Jewish—had been sent away. "He lost everyone," my uncle says. He says "lost," as if my grandfather

had misplaced his keys, or as if they had all wandered off in the wrong direction. But I know that "lost" means they had been murdered.

I am 17. At Yad Vashem, the archivist behind the desk laughs at me. Finding information about my murdered family will be unlikely, she warns. I suppose she's trying to prepare me for disappointment. But then she adds, "Unless they were Dutch." My neck feels hot. "Yes, they were from The Netherlands," Again, the archivist laughs. "Still, you'll never find them. Unless they had an unusual name." I nod my head. "*Ziekenoppasser*." The archivist, no longer laughing, stands and lead me to the books of the dead.

I am 42. I am a parent now. And I teach about hidden Holocaust histories. I write and teach about the Nazis' forced sterilizations of people of African, Roma, and Jewish descent and people with disabilities, which ran in parallel to the U.S. governments' forced sterilizations of people with disabilities and Black, Latina, and Native American women throughout the twentieth century; the Holocaust was an extreme case of White Supremacy. When I teach about the Nazis' use of gas chambers to

murder entire Jewish families and Jewish communities, I support my students to explore why Holocaust education and commemoration rarely include stories of the Nazis' Roma and disabled victims who were also murdered in the Nazi gas chambers. I teach about the Nazis' persecution of homosexuals and about sexual violence in the Nazi camps, and I help my students to identify connections between Nazi ideology and contemporary homophobia, transphobia, and misogyny.

I am 35. My suitcase is packed for my first visit to the site of Auschwitz. In general terms, I know what to expect. I've studied the photographs of the camp and read the books and taken the online virtual tour. I have a good idea of what I'll see. But I don't know how I'll respond in the moment or how I might be changed by this journey. Part of me fears being entirely overwhelmed. Part of me fears feeling nothing. Part of me expects, at nighttime, to slip back into the surreal Holocaust nightmares of my childhood.

We walk in shadows of shadows. We grow up surrounded by silence. Perpetrators of violence hide and deny their crimes, and bystanders in positions of power pretend that they couldn't have

taken a stand against them. Only certain narratives make it into our collective memories and, even then, they are too often oversimplified into tales of good versus evil, heroes versus monsters. But the truth is dark. Someone's father drives the train to the Nazi camp. Someone's sister whips the prisoners. Someone's mother injects lethal chemicals into the veins of her patients. Someone's son pours the pellets of Zyklon B into the gas chambers filled with other people's children. Too often we forget that the Holocaust was perpetrated by humans against other humans.

I stand at the ruins of Gas Chamber III at Birkenau and I recite to my group the little I know of my family's story. I am 35. As I speak, I wonder if this was exactly where my cousins were murdered. Suddenly, unexpectedly, I'm struck with the realization that I will likely return to Auschwitz a number of times in my life. I am no longer scared. This is my family's history. This is my history. This is my daughter's history.

I am 17. I stand in the archives at Yad Vashem. The archivist takes me to the books of the dead. In the final book, on the final pages, we find *Ziekenoppasser—Ziekenoppasser—*

Ziekenoppasser—a list of men and women, all with the last name *Ziekenoppasser*, dates of birth—*Ziekenoppasser*—places of birth—*Ziekenoppasser*—*Ziekenoppasser*—*Ziekenoppasser*—deported from Amsterdam and other Dutch cities and towns—*Ziekenoppasser*—*Ziekenoppasser*—murdered at Sobibor—*Ziekenoppasser*—murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Sobibor. Sobibor. *Ziekenoppasser*. Auschwitz. *Ziekenoppasser*. Auschwitz. Auschwitz. Auschwitz. *Ziekenoppasser*. I reach to pick up the book, but the archivist stops me. She carries the book, cradles it like a newborn baby, to the photocopier. I fax the pages to my mother and my uncles in London. But they don't know these names. My grandfather hadn't told them enough. Either these men and women are strangers—someone else's family—or they belong to my family's lost memories.

Introduction

Wendy Adele-Marie

This textbook, an Open Educational Resource (OER), is dedicated to the community college student and to the community we serve. Writing this book during a pandemic has lent pathos to this project. So many of us have lost loved ones and have been away from normalcy. Reflecting on that, I think about my beloved friend, everyone's grandma, and Holocaust survivor Magda Brown. As Magda said to my student in late March 2020, right after the pandemic began, that you have to have - and these are her exact words as she typed them in response to a question my student asked: "Thank you for paying close attention to my testimony and remembering many details. I want to share with you the words I live by. YOU HAVE TO HAVE FAITH, FANTASY, DRIVE, DETERMINATION, AND BELIEF THAT TOMORROW WILL BE BETTER." Magda's words serve us all well. Sadly, we lost Magda in July 2020. She was a much-loved member of our community, and her drive for Holocaust education was a global inspiration to everyone.

Following Magda's example, I note that I have been teaching the Holocaust since 2002, and what I have learned since, and regret much, is that the cost of textbooks is a systemic barrier to higher education. Thus, a primary goal with creating this OER was to develop an affordable, applicable, adaptable, creative, and helpful resource. The OER is meant to introduce the subject and a primer to topics not often discussed and include many contributions from my former students, new researchers, my colleagues, and noted scholars in the field. The subject matter included in this book is rich in topics and varied in scope.

For the students having a free sourcebook that can serve as a research guide will benefit them. Also, it can serve as a reminder of the critical objectives taught in a Holocaust class, supporting the development of student's critical thinking and emotional literacy by providing a framework by which they can challenge misconceptions. The guide is by no means perfect. There are more subject to be added, and corrections to be made. That is the beauty of an open-educational resource. The author can adjust, make

additions, and complete deletions. New information comes out and from the rarest of places.

Recently, Wendy Lower's groundbreaking new book, *The Ravine: a Family, a Photograph, a Holocaust Massacre Revealed* was published. It took ten years, but Lower, 80 years after the murder of a mother and a child at the hands of Nazi collaborators, saw that the woman and her child's identity emerged. Through her observation and action research engagement, Lower discovered a previously unknown third victim, a tiny baby whose hand is barely visible in the photograph, as the baby was hidden in the mother's lower body. Last, Lower tracked down who took the image. The photographer was a member of the Slovakian resistance. The perpetrators' identities were also exposed. Through rich observation and action research, Lower created a thematic framework that resulted in a groundbreaking qualitative study.

Holocaust education is not finite. There are more topics to be covered, and uncovered; thus, I will add more chapters so the reader can expect more additions. Note that citations may also be added, updated, or deleted. I welcome suggestions for future

content. If you are interested in contributing an entry, feel free to reach out to me. This OER was truly a community effort, and I am grateful to everyone who was a part of this servant leadership project to make a difference and provide a free educational resource. The mission and vision of this OER emerged based on my work within the Jewish Studies concentration that I founded in 2012 at Oakton Community College.

The mission of this text is to uphold a strategic obligation to teach Holocaust studies to future generations within a fair, tolerant, and academic environment founded on the principles of patience, justice, accountability, empathy, and honesty.

The vision is clear, as the book demonstrates its determination to offer a guide to promote critical thinking about the Holocaust. To achieve the mission and vision of the text, the specific goals are as follows. The first goal affirms a commitment to Holocaust education. The second goal promotes the study of the subject and provides a free, approachable text for students to learn from to work towards preventing ignorance, stop hate, racism, antisemitism, and anti-immigrant prejudices. The third goal

encourages inclusive discourse encouraged for its student population via academic research, live seminars, and guided learning communities.

Research supports this need for an approachable text that not only teaches students about the dangers of hate but critically, they must be instructed in what motivated the perpetrators. Learning about motivation is an essential element to help students understand motivations and state-sponsored rewards for perpetrators and their relationship to the victimization of those designated as undesirables. We will see how genocidal precursors influenced Nazi racialist and gender ideologies and practices and how the Holocaust threatened the collapse of humanistic values.

For students, learning about the Holocaust can broaden historical and ethical horizons through a wide variety of sources, including historical documentation and testimony. My hope and goal are to engage the reader and challenge them to continue studying the subject. As ongoing pedagogical research shows, again, we must lead students towards the intellectual skills needed

to understand how the Nazis came to power, how the Holocaust evolved and how ordinary people can make a difference.

Recommendation for further reading

Keen, A. (2021, March 18). *Wendy Lower on the political power of photography*. Literary hub. https://lithub.com/wendy-lower-on-the-political-power-of-photography/

Chapter One: Introduction to the Holocaust

Wendy Adele-Marie

From 1933 to 1945, Nazi Germany perpetrated genocide against millions of peoples. The Holocaust was an intentional, systematic, bureaucratic, nearly successful ideological attempt to murder the Jews totally and cosmically because they existed. A central act of state undertaken by the Nazis and collaborators, the Holocaust occurred when six million Jews and five million others were murdered systematically by the Nazi regime (1933–1945) and their collaborators. Xenophobic agrarian-oriented ideology dictated this need to cleanse the German race by the complete annihilation of all Jews and the cosmic destruction of Judaism. The Nazis also murdered millions of non-Jews.

The word "Holocaust" was derived from the Latin *holocaustum*, and the Greek *holokauston* (burnt whole). Due to internal accusations and state disorder post WWI, coupled with economic deprivation, hardship, and more, it was part of the reason why we see the ascent of Hitler and the Nazis. Hitler was appointed Chancellor in January 1933 and became *Führer* in

August 1934, after he “amalgamated the office of president and took control of the armed forces” (Adele-Marie, 2005). Further,

> resistance to the Nazis was crushed, and many dissidents were sent to concentration camps. The ubiquitous Gestapo kept tabs on the population, but the state was not characterized solely by repression by any means. In the first several years, Hitler was carried forward on a wave of disillusionment with the Weimar Republic, and a plebiscite showed that a solid majority of Germans approved of his actions. Almost on assuming political power, Hitler initiated actions against the Jews. They were turned into a race of "untouchables" within their own state, unable to pursue certain careers and a public life. The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 defined as Jewish anyone with one Jewish grandparent. That a terrible fate would be their lot was clear in Hitler's remarks that war in Europe would lead to the “extinction of the Jewish race in Europe.” (Adele-Marie, 2005)

No Jews were safe. The Nazis targeted all Jews, as the regime's primary goal was to exterminate every single Jew in the world and wipe out Judaism itself (Adele-Marie, 2009). Once the Jews were gone, the Nazis were intent on systematically eliminating millions of others, scaffolding their victims to include the disabled, Jehovah's Witnesses, Catholics, Afro-Germans, the LGBTQ community, and many others (Adele-Marie, 2009). For the non-Jewish victims of the Nazis, the regime

> classified Jews as the priority "enemy," the Nazi ideological concept of race targeted other groups for persecution, imprisonment, and annihilation, including Roma (Gypsies), people with disabilities, Poles, Soviet prisoners of war and Afro-Germans. The Nazis also identified political dissidents, Jehovah's Witnesses, Gay men, and others. The Nazis also used the term asocial. This was used, for example, for anyone that did not fit any of their other categories were asocial. These people were all seen as enemies and security risks either because they consciously opposed the Nazi regime, or some aspect of

> their behavior did not fit Nazi perceptions of social norms. They sought to eliminate domestic non-conformists and so-called racial threats through a perpetual self-purge of German society. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2019)

The Holocaust demonstrates the banality of human evil and challenges us to confront human behavior. When people do not stand up to aggressors, actions against their targets begin, and,

> because of the silence of the general and international populace, genocide emerges. Analysis of the regime's intent indicated that the Nazis - who had a psychic obsession with the Jews - intentionally chose the Jews first for separation, then removal, and then destruction. Adolf Hitler's objective (1889–1945) to obliterate the Jews and others designated as enemies of the state. Destruction was facilitated by acceptance, industry, and a failure by the world to intervene. Moreover, the Holocaust marked an industrialized nation that used the first-time advanced

> technology to commit mass murder on such an immense scale. (Adele-Marie, 2009)

Even if people did not follow Nazi beliefs, or acted as impassive citizens (or, at worse, total bystanders), many were convinced because of what both Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl and author Diana Stirling referred to as the implied psychology of fear (Kohl, 2011).

Known as the “psychology of coercion,” the Nazis used historical antisemitism, fear, projected hysteria, and coercion to "justify" actions against six million Jews and millions of others, even blaming the Jews for having brought the war upon Germany as seen with speeches given by Hitler and his cohorts (Kohl, 2011). The Nazis would have 42,500 concentration camps, ghettos, and the six killing centers (formerly known as extermination camps) to carry out unprecedented genocide. Chapter two begins with a look at the origins of antisemitism and connects it with the Holocaust.

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Chapter Two: Antisemitism

Introduction to the Subject of Antisemitism

Wendy Adele-Marie

> Once I thought that antisemitism had ended; today it is clear to me that it will probably never end. Elie Wiesel, Holocaust Survivor

Before beginning this chapter, I recommend that the reader pause, and watch this 14-minute film from the Echoes & Reflections video toolbox, linked here Antisemitism, and also found here: http://echoesandreflections.org/video_toolbox/?testvid=1 (Echoes and Reflections, 2021).

From a lesson that I had developed on antisemitism, I have explained to my students that a stereotype is a distorted generalization about a person or group. Stereotypes are particularly dangerous because they express very negative things about a group of people (e.g., violent, greedy). Such stereotypes perpetuate hateful attitudes, hurt individuals, and damage entire communities. Antisemitism may take the form of rhetoric that proclaims the

inferiority of Jews, their supposedly evil nature, or perpetrates other negative ideas about Jews. It may include political efforts to isolate, oppress, or otherwise injure them. It may also include prejudiced or other stereotyped views about Jews derived from hate or other harmful ideologies.

Historian John Weiss established five stages of antisemitism in his essay "Antisemitism through the Ages," and he lists these stages:

1. Christian antisemitism (many reject this).
2. Commercial ("Jews were plagued for centuries by accusations that they innately preferred to exploit and manipulate others through dishonest commercial practices and usurious moneylending), economic crises of war.
3. Jews were associated with liberalism and progressivism. Failed revolution of 1848 to establish national political representation.
4. Anthropology (based on perceived and false racial differences, physical characteristics, intellect, and morality)
5. Ethnic nationalism. (Niewyk, 1997)

What stands out to me about antisemitism are those courageous survivors who fought – and still fight – against it.

One event was a stark reminder of what antisemitism leads to when my dear friend Magda Brown told me about a day in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which was covered by *The Washington Post*. *The Post* stated that "In times like these we look to our elders to sort things out, to put things in perspective" (Zak, 2018). Further, *The Post* cited how "Magda Brown has faced far worse than a country gone crazy with guns. She has a scarred bump on her left foot, from the wooden slippers at Auschwitz. Every step is a reminder" (Zak, 2018). Magda survived Auschwitz and Allendorf, a sub-camp of Buchenwald.

In 2018, as I was heading to Oakton to teach my class on the History of the Holocaust, I had just heard about the mass shootings in Pittsburgh at the Tree of Life synagogue. I thought, oh no - Magda was there or was on her way there to speak in the context of her work as a survivor. I thought she would postpone. I started my Holocaust class and had an idea to call Magda and put her on speaker to talk live with my students about what had

happened. What occurred next was unexpected. I briefly spoke to Rochelle, Magda's daughter, and she put her mother on the phone. Magda said that she could not talk, she was about to go through TSA at the airport. The entire class all asked her where are you going? She said "I am going to Pittsburgh! They need me more than ever before." My students and I were in awe of her courage. This excerpt is from her website:

> in October 2018, Magda was scheduled to speak at Chatham University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The tragic shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue took place the day before. Magda didn't hesitate to board the plane to Pittsburgh, saying, "Now the world needs to hear the message even more. Let's go." Magda's experience was covered by and a variety of other media outlets, reaching millions of people. (Brown, 2021)

Antisemitism is on the rise. As Elie Wiesel said, it has not gone away. In her critical essay, that follows historian Sherry Bard explains antisemitism, why we must learn about it, and she provides additional resources for further research and

investigation. Before you move on to the next section, pause here to read this essay Antisemitism (Echoes and Reflections, 2021a). It will be critical to an understanding antisemitism, and the role that it had in the Holocaust.

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Will Antisemitism Ever End?

Sherry Bard

It was just over 20 years ago, a few minutes before 11 a.m., when white supremacist Buford O. Furrow, Jr. walked into the lobby of the North Valley Jewish Community Center in Granada Hills, California, a few miles from where I live, and opened fire with a machine gun, firing 70 bullets. Five people were wounded, three children, a teenage counselor, and an office worker. After the shooter left the scene, he drove around and shot and killed a mail carrier and then fled the state before surrendering to authorities. As my family and friends watched in shock as the events unfolded on the news that day, we could not believe that this violent expression of hate was happening in our own backyard. The trauma of that memory remains with us today.

Several years later, in 2014, Holocaust survivor, scholar and author Elie Wiesel shared the following thoughts on the enduring nature of antisemitism and its ultimate consequence :

> Once I thought that anti-Semitism had ended; today it is clear to me that it will probably never end. It might weaken

> sometimes, but it will continue existing, because in different countries there is no shame in being an anti-Semite. We must remember that anti-Semitism led to Auschwitz. Without anti-Semitism there would have been no Auschwitz (Wiesel, 2014).

"Never again"

Like many survivors, Elie Wiesel had hoped that after the Holocaust the world would have come to recognize the dangers of antisemitism, and that the often-uttered mantra, "never again," would become a reality. However, as we know, genocides continue and antisemitism, the hatred that fueled the Holocaust, persists.

Today, we are witnessing an alarming rise in antisemitism, stoked by current political rhetoric and divisions. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, there are now more than 1,600 extremist groups operating across the country, many of which espouse antisemitic beliefs. These groups are spreading their messages of hate and recruiting new followers by leveraging online tools, including various social media platforms, many of which do not regulate their content. One such movement, QAnon,

which has captured recent headlines for its global conspiracy theories and antisemitic undertones, was designated as a "domestic terror threat" by the FBI in 2019.

According to the Anti-Defamation League, since 2016, the United States has experienced a sharp and alarming rise in antisemitic acts. In its Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2020, the most recent report to date, there were more than 2,000 recorded incidents of violence, harassment and vandalism against Jews. While antisemitic incidents declined by 4% in 2020 as compared to the previous year, 2019 saw the largest number since ADL began tracking this data more than forty years ago.

Why the Jews?

The question of why people hate Jews is certainly perplexing and one we may never truly understand. Is it that people perceive Jews as different from themselves? Elie Wiesel concluded that the endurance of antisemitism remains a mystery and described it as an "irrational disease."

The term "antisemitism" was first coined in Germany in the 19th century by Wilhelm Marr. Echoes & Reflections, an

educational program and partnership of the Anti-Defamation League, USC Shoah Foundation, and Yad Vashem, defines it as hatred of Jews as a group or concept. To understand the meaning of "concept" in this definition, consider that while Jews today make up less than 1% of the world population, actually just .2%, individuals can hold antisemitic beliefs without ever having met a Jewish person. These attitudes can be based on stereotypes, misinformation, and falsehoods. In other words, antisemitic attitudes can exist in places where there are few or no Jews residing.

A new or old phenomenon?

Antisemitism is undoubtedly not a new phenomenon. The late historian Robert Wistrich dubbed antisemitism "the longest hatred," given that it's been around for more than 2,000 years.

Throughout history, antisemitism has taken on different forms. It is influenced and shaped by the time and place in which it occurs as well as by culture, beliefs and events. However, there are key motifs or myths, that are constant. For example, Jews have been accused of being in league with the devil.

The roots of antisemitism date back to the beginning of Christianity. During this time, leaders in the Catholic hierarchy held Jews responsible for the crucifixion of Christ and believed that they deserved to be punished for not denouncing their faith and accepting Christianity.

Over time, Jews have been blamed for many of humanity's shortfalls and natural disasters. For example, during the Middle Ages, Jews were blamed for the Black Death and poisoning wells. We also saw the emergence of blood libels against the Jews during this time, another myth that endures today. Blood libel is the notion that Jews lure and kidnap Christian children to use their blood for Jewish rituals, such as making matzo (unleavened bread) for the Passover holiday. Today, there are those who believe that Jews were responsible for the 9/11 attacks and for the Covid-19 pandemic.

The most widely circulated and perhaps most notorious antisemitic publication is the book *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which was first published in 1905. It was said to be the secret minutes of a Jewish council meeting plotting world domination. In

reality, the publication was a hoax carried out by the Russian secret police. Over the past century, this discredited document has been translated into dozens of languages and spread worldwide. Here in the United States, Henry Ford, the founder of Ford Motor Company, translated the document into English and printed it in his newspaper, the *Dearborn Independent,* in the 1920s. Some today teach the *Protocols* as fact.

The Holocaust is certainly history's most extreme example of antisemitism. The innovation to antisemitism that was central to Nazi ideology were the ideas about race. The Nazis declared the Aryan race superior, pure, strong and good and the Jews demonic and inferior, intent on world domination. Moreover, Jews made up less than 1% of the population in Germany before World War II, and over 100,000 of them had fought for their country during World War I.

How does hate spread?

How did the Nazis spread their antisemitic messages? They took control of the media, including newspapers and radio, to spread hateful propaganda about the Jews. In addition to adults,

children were a key target audience. Teachers were required to join the Nazi Party, and Nazi ideology was taught in school.

The theoretical aspects of race education were thought to be complex for young children to grasp, so the Nazis used familiar devices such as fairytales to help children more easily understand and embrace antisemitism. An example is *The Poisonous Mushroom*, which was published in 1938 by Julius Streicher. The book focuses on the corrupt and evil nature of Jews. It uses the mushroom as a metaphor for Jews proclaiming that it is very hard to distinguish between poisonous mushrooms and edible ones and that they can spread all over the place without control, just like the Jews.

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, additional antisemitic ideas have taken hold including-denial and distortion of the Holocaust. This can range from the assertion that the Holocaust didn't happen, to accusations that the number of Jews murdered is greatly exaggerated. In addition, there are those who say that there were no gas chambers, and that people died of natural causes, even though the Holocaust is perhaps the most widely documented

event in history, much of which was detailed by the perpetrators themselves. Deniers say that Jews lie about the Holocaust in order to get money and to have a State (Israel). Another recent idea being spread is termed the "New Antisemitism," which is the delegitimization and demonization of Israel and its people.

Where do we go from here?

On October 27, 2018, we witnessed the attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue, in Pittsburgh, in which 11 worshippers were murdered and six others injured. Two years later, Audrey Glickman, who survived the shooting told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette that "When Jews say of the departed, 'may their memory be for a blessing,' the word 'for' is crucial — moving from memory to future action. The people we lost have a legacy," she said. "It's on us now to continue to not only build ourselves but build on the legacy that was left to us" (Smith, 2021).

In a recent interview on CBS This Morning, Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the Anti-Defamation League made the following remark about contemporary antisemitism and how he thinks we need to respond: "I think we're now moving into a

dangerous new phase and it is going to require government and business and civil society to work hand in hand to lock arms to push back on the surge of prejudice" (Greenblatt, 2021).

Rising antisemitism is a bellwether, a warning sign of issues that can have far-reaching and long-lasting effects. As Samantha Power, author and former ambassador to the United Nations notes, "Rising anti-Semitism is rarely the lone or the last expression of intolerance in a society" (Power, 2014).

Her statement reminds us that if antisemitism and other forms of hatred are ever going to end, we have to be vigilant. And, as Elie Wiesel warned,

> We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must - at that

moment - become the center of the universe (Wiesel, 2014).

As a society, perhaps our most critical obligation is to remember that we are all interconnected and need stand up for one other.

Note: Throughout this article, the term antisemitism is written as both antisemitism and anti-Semitism. The author has chosen the version "antisemitism," which is how the Anti-Defamation League expresses this term. Anti-Semitism was used only when it was part of a quote. Visit the Anti-Defamation League for more information.

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Chapter Three: The Backgrounds to and Stages of Genocide

Wendy Adele-Marie

Author and attorney Raphael Lemkin in 1933 wanted an international treaty against genocide. In 1944, he defined the word genocide in his book, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. Genocide is defined as the systematic destruction of a nation or ethnic group via direct or indirect means. How does genocide start? There are answers and many nuances to the subject, but we can begin to approach the topic in this way by scaffolding the topic.

Hate can be emotional, reactive, and stir up sentiments such as anger and blame. If something is going badly for an individual, or if a collective group has an issue about anything, whether micro or macro, hate can lead to blaming, and that need to blame someone for whatever the group is upset about can quickly lead to crimes against humanity. Hate is historical, as are abuses, colonization, enslavement, racism, torture, separation, segregation, and assignation of blame. Jews and others have been targeted for millennia. Genocide has occurred since ancient times, as historian R.J. Rummel wrote about in his work *Power Kills*. Rummel noted

how propaganda led him to draw false and dangerous information about specific groups as a young student. Rummel (1997) further elaborated that he was driven to undertake quantitative research to understand how genocide and mass murder has killed more people than war. Rummel (1997) combines the words genocide and mass murder into the word *democide*, meaning murder of an unprecedent scale. In *Power Kills*, which has been digitized, he outlines how many tens of millions of people worldwide have been killed as a result of democide. Rummel (1997) noted the origins of how he began his research and how the word democide emerged:

> My true interest was in understanding and doing something about the legal killing called war and it was a happy surprise to discover that I could actually focus my studies on the history, conditions, and causes of war. Through undergraduate and graduate term papers, my MA thesis and Ph.D. dissertation in 1963, and the research since, this has been my ultimate concern. This research has taken numerous paths and has expanded to understand violence and conflict generally and their possible

> explanations, but always down the road and until recent years I hoped to have something specific to recommend about ending war. But in the mid-1980s I was shocked to discover that several times more people were killed in democide (genocide and mass murder) by governments than died in warfare. And with that my aim broadened to help end or at least lessen this killing as well. This book presents the sum of that research. And, I believe, I finally can offer what appears a most realistic and practical solution to war, democide, and other collective violence. (Rummel, 1997, para. 11)

So then, how did Hitler kill millions of people? Start with this essay: Without Hitler, would there have been a Holocaust? by Sir Ian Kershaw Then, to understand the logic behind the statement, no Hitler, no Holocaust, consider that "the Holocaust took place because individuals, groups, and nations made decisions to act or not to act" (USHMM, 2021). Rummel also explained that

> Genocide is foremost an international crime for which individuals, no matter how high in authority, may be

indicted, tried, and punished by the International Criminal Court (ICC). According to Article 6 of the ICC Statute, This crime involves, "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

> (a) Killing members of the group;
>
> (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
>
> (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
>
> (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
>
> (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. (Rummel, 2019)

Rummel (2013) suggested that in addition to the six million Jews killed by the Nazis, that the regime was responsible for upwards of 20,000,000 deaths.

Rummel used a picture from the Nuremberg Trials to show how the Nazis calculated how countless peoples they murdered, noting that although the Nazis destroyed many records, enough

remained intact that documented ongoing genocide during war, which Rummel classified as a democide.

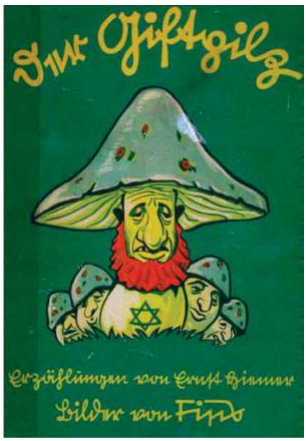
Dated from January of 1942, this image with an overview of Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia, the *Einsatzgruppe A* [task forces, special action groups] note by the coffins how many Jews they killed. In Estonia, they wrote the word *Judenfrei*, which means free of Jews.

(International Military Tribunal's Office of the United States Chief of Counsel For Prosecution of Axis Criminality, 1946).

The above crude map clearly outlined both intent and aftermath. How do governments convince ordinary people to perpetrate such horrific crimes? There are stages of genocide, and

propaganda plays a key role in introducing, implementing, and denying genocide. Whether propaganda is presented in images, film, radio addresses or speeches, it can be effective. Nazi propaganda was certainly used to perpetrate genocide. Here, we will look at some examples of Nazi propaganda images.

Below is an image from the children's book *The Poisonous Mushroom* (*Der Giftpilz)* that the Nazis created for children. Here, the Jew is portrayed as a poisonous mushroom, noting it is impossible to ascertain among the mushrooms – standing in for Jews – who are good and who are bad. The implication is why take a chance on any of these mushrooms? If one cannot be trusted to be safe, how can any be trusted at all?



(Echoes & Reflections, 2021).

Here is another propaganda image developed by the Nazis to falsely depict Jews as a threat to children:

(Echoes & Reflections, 2021).

The pictures show that Nazis wanted to portray the Jews as a threat to Aryan children. Echoes & Reflections stated that this image, also taken from *The Poisonous Mushroom*, states: "Here my little one, you get something very sweet, but as a reward you both must come with me" (Echoes & Reflections, 2021). Thus, the image was a threat to all parents who feared that something would happen to their children. Another image alleges to show contrast between an Aryan man and a Jewish man:

(Echoes & Reflections, 2021).

The Aryan is presented as strong and fit, with a clear gaze. In contrast, the Jewish man is falsely depicted as out of shape, unclean, and with a strange look in his eyes. Propagandic images such as the ones above classified the Jews as treacherous.

The Nazis continually classified Jews as enemies and dangerous. Symbolization was used to further antisemitism. Jews were discriminated against and dehumanized through various ways, from legal, as seen in the 1935 passage of the Nuremberg Laws. The Nazis organized actions against Jews, polarized them from German and later European society. Preparation for the

Holocaust began when the Nazis established the first concentration camp, Dachau, built in March 1933. Persecution of the Jews and others had been ongoing since the regime came to power and escalated. Extermination began in earnest with the killing centers (formerly known as extermination camps). However, millions died in the ghettos and concentration camps, which the Nazis had, in total, 42,500. Denial began during the Holocaust and continues to this day. Here are the ten stages of genocide:

Ten stages of genocide:

1. Classification.

2. Symbolization.

3. Discrimination.

4. Dehumanization.

5. Organization.

6. Polarization.

7. Preparation.

8. Persecution.

9. Extermination.

10. Denial. (Stanton, 2016)

In the case of the Nazi genocide, known as the Holocaust, all ten stages existed. Denial is rightfully listed as the tenth stage of genocide. To deny is to defy logic. For the Nazis, xenophobic agrarian-oriented ideology dictated a need to cleanse the German race by the complete annihilation of all Jews through genocide.

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Genocide and Holocaust as an Outgrowth of the Political, Economic, Social, Ideological, and International Crises of the Twentieth Century

Leon Stein and Wendy Adele-Marie with comments by Daniel Patrick Brown

Ideological movements and dictatorships perpetrated genocides and the Holocaust, including genocide against the Armenians in 1915, genocide in Soviet Russia in 1929 and 1932, Nazi Germany in 1933, Communist Cambodia in 1975, and the Bosnian genocide that began in 1992. Gregory Stanton, Ph.D., scholar and founder of Genocide Watch, developed a website that scaffolds the stages of genocide, which can be accessed here: https://www.genocidewatch.com/ (a note of caution for the reader: Genocide Watch graphic depiction and discussion on past, current, and projected genocides, that include statistics, images and more). On that website, current concerns and ongoing genocidal acts and actions are listed. Stanton has updated calls for action, including the persecution of LGBTQ+ communities, to the use of chemical weapons against innocent civilians. The current world situation is grievous, and Stanton's site calls for action, for the world never to forget and to act.

Facilitating genocide can emerge as an act of government, and genocidal regimes will frequently develop a system of propaganda and indoctrination that appealed to a cross-section of their societies, promising both salvation and rewards to the perpetrators. For example, the Turks referred to the Armenians as a dire threat, the Soviets and Cambodians made war on the peasants and middle class as “class enemies,” and the Nazis characterized the Jews as “satanic vermin” that had to be wiped off the face of the earth.

In the context of this essay, Daniel Patrick Brown and Adele Marie discussed other genocides of the past 100 years. Brown noted the Rwandan genocide of April-July 1994, which was an incredibly vicious effort to annihilate the Tutsi people (hatchets, hoes, and machetes were most often the weapon used to kill the Tutsis). The Hutu media, particularly *Radio Television Libre des Milie Colines* (RTLM), began a campaign in early 1993 of targeting the Tutis as *inyenzi* (translated roughly as "cockroaches"). Just as references to the Soviet "class enemies," the Nazis' "satanic vermin," and the Turks' concern for their so-

called "internal security," helped pave the way for the mass murder of objectified targets, the preparation for the Rwanda genocide required the Hutus to generate venomous hatred for their victims.

Also, the Rwandan genocide had its roots in the European colonization of Africa in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century. In Rwanda's case, the clash between the Hutus and Tutsis was partly the result of the clash between the Belgians and the German occupiers of Burundi. Brown also noted that What is so chilling about the Rwandan genocide is that the death toll is so difficult to discern as it was just mass carnage at an unimaginable level for about three months.

Social and economic crises caused by social revolution and the great depression enabled these regimes to power. Wars and international crises provided the preconditions, facilitated, and triggered the genocides. The First World War was one causal factor for the Armenian genocide, the Soviet war on the peasants and Ukrainians was prompted by fear of war, and the Vietnam War facilitated the Cambodian genocide. These genocides were led by fanatical leaders who coordinated the government’s army,

bureaucracy, police, and propaganda branches.

Often motivated by extreme nationalism, and in the case of the Nazis, total annihilation coupled with racism, these leaders and their governments were collectively responsible for the deaths of tens of millions. Historian R.J. Rummel referred to these governments as megamurders. These governments often classified their victims in such a way as to give the appearance that removal and murder were necessary functions to ensure the safety of the rest of the populace.

Arguably, genocide was also used as an instrument of control, subjugation and, especially with the Nazis, allowed for the development of "ordinary men" – indeed, even women – into murderous perpetrators. As each country became involved with civil unrest or war, combat created an atmosphere of crisis, destroyed critical thinking, blurred the distinction between soldiers and civilians, and provided an opportunity for total domination and imperial expansion. All these forces combined to make the twentieth century the age of genocide and the Holocaust.

Chapter Four: Nazi Genocide

Nazi Intent: The Holocaust

Wendy Adele-Marie

The Holocaust was not inevitable. However, the intent to murder the Jews was always foremost in early Hitlerian policies; validation of this theory comes from Hitler himself, Historian Sir Ian Kershaw, the world's most renowned expert on Adolf Hitler confirms Hitler's intent, noting that Hitler was not sure *how* it would be accomplished, but that it *would* be accomplished. In a 1920 meeting of the NSDAP, Hitler stated that

> for us, this is not a problem you can turn a blind eye to-one to be solved by small concessions. For us, it is a problem of whether our nation can ever recover its health, whether the Jewish spirit can ever really be eradicated. Don't be misled into thinking you can fight a disease without killing the carrier, without destroying the bacillus. (Stein, 2019)

In a 2009 interview with historian Laurence Rees, Kershaw noted that "the aim of destroying the power of the Jews, shall we say,

was there right from the very beginning. How this would be undertaken, nobody knew, not even Hitler" (Rees, 2009). Consider Hitler's words in his 1925 book, *Mein Kampf* [My Struggle]:

> if at the outbreak and during the war, twelve or fifteen thousand of these Hebrew nation-corruptors had been held under poison gas once, as hundreds of thousands of our best German workers from all classes and callings had to endure on the battlefield, then the sacrifice of millions on the front would not have been in vain.

Hitler also said in *Mein Kampf* [My Struggle]:

> on the contrary: twelve thousand scoundrels eliminated at the right time would perhaps have saved the lives of a million Germans who are more orderly and more valuable for the future.

Kershaw (2009) stated that once Hitler became Chancellor in January 1933, that the intent was to expel the Jews from Germany, but that once the war was underway, the Nazis then had to address what they called the Jewish question. Hitler and the Nazis had both

power, authority, and later, developed a totalitarian state by the end of August 1934. The 1935 passage of the Nuremberg Laws was a blueprint that made the Holocaust possible. Then, before the war, the Nazis implemented genocidal policies within Germany itself. The Nazi concentration camps and killing centers originated with the planning and development of a concentration camp called Dachau, near Munich, Germany, in March of 1933. Dachau would be the prototype of the Nazi concentration camps and later killing centers. After Dachau, in 1933, the very first year that the Nazis came to power, they had already constructed over 100 camps "to imprison political opponents and other undesirables" (The Jewish Virtual Library, 2018). Concentration camps were designed as inmate holding facilities and were used as a labor source.

Several of the concentration camps also provided the Nazi doctors with human subjects for medical and other experimentation. Prisoners were held in the concentration camps until they were selected for euthanasia or died of disease or illness. The exclusive purpose of the killing centers was to kill. The concentration and later establishment of the six killing centers

became a highly organized ideological and bureaucratic enterprise of abuse, humiliation, torture, and murder. In some instances, flowcharts were created for the Nazis to follow in order to achieve maximum output of death. The creation of the Nazi camps was also significant in that, for the first time in history, a form of technological slaughter was utilized to kill the Jews, and any other people the Nazis targeted as undesirables simply because they existed. Once Nazi Germany began to break their borders, more Jews were targeted, as "attacks had been happening in Nazi Germany's occupied territories for years" (Boissoneault, 2016). After the 1939 invasion of Poland, the advent of genocide emerged into an intensity unimaginable in human history.

Further, Kershaw said that after 1939, Nazi "policies became more extreme, more radical, and more genocidal" and that from September 1939 to June 1941, "in those 18 months an immense radicalization in the direction of genocide had already taken place" that would result in the murder of six million Jews (Rees, 2009). Kershaw also stated that

> the 'Final Solution' as it came about might have come about in different ways, because the original notion was you deport Europe's Jews into the Soviet Union and there they will starve to death or they will be worked to death or whatever, over a long period of time in the icy wastes of the Soviet Union and they will die out. It was genocidal by a different route. And, of course, in the meanwhile the Soviet Jews had largely been shot. So, genocide was there implicit in that attack on the Soviet Union, and nobody really attempted to hide this at all in the German leadership. (Rees, 2009)

Kershaw explained that the intent was there over a decade before Hitler was appointed as Chancellor and that once he came to power, his actions against his enemies were, at first, carefully scaffolded in its intensity as laws were passed that enabled the government to act against its people. Eventually, the Nazis targeted millions for extermination. Five million non-Jewish victims would perish at the hands of the Nazis; these groups included gay men, Communists, Socialists, resisters, POWs, members of religious

institutions, the disabled, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Afro-Germans, the Roma and Sinti, criminals, and many more. Victims were categorized as sub-human, akin to vermin or a bacterium. No one was left untouched if they were classified as asocial or an enemy of the state. Importantly, as Kershaw explains, after the invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, there was a shift in Nazi policy:

> once it didn't work out in terms of the Nazi vision of totally destroying the Soviet Union and having this option of pushing the European Jews into it then, of course, the actual genocide that came out with this so-called 'Final Solution' took place in extermination units on Polish soil which was something that was devised as the war in the East didn't go according to plan in the autumn and the winter of 1941-2. But genocide was there absolutely as a central point of this war in the East and therefore you could say that genocide was a central component of the Second World War itself. (Rees, 2009).

In January 1942, at the Wannsee Conference, the decision was made to implement the Final Solution: all of the Jews were to die. However, how could one group led by one man convince a populace to murder millions?

Even if people did not follow Nazi beliefs, or acted as impassive citizens, some historians have suggested that many in Germany were convinced of the *implied legitimacy of the laws* because of the aforementioned concept known as the implied psychology of fear. Again, Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl investigated this theory, as have many other psychologists and historians. Known as the psychology of coercion, using historical antisemitism, fear, and projected hysteria, the Nazis used coercion to "justify" actions against the Jews and others, as well as the war itself. As Adele-Marie stated, "In the first several years, Hitler was carried forward on a wave of disillusionment with the Weimar Republic, and a plebiscite showed that a solid majority of Germans approved of his actions" (Adele-Marie, 2005). Millions stood by while people went to the camps. People left and never

came back. People were both passive and intentional bystanders to these disappearances.

According to Gregory Mullins, professor of educational leadership at the University of the Cumberlands, the term *authority* is often used interchangeably with *power* in government. However, their meanings differ: *Power* is defined as "the ability to influence somebody to do something that he/she would not have done" (Mullins, 2020). *Authority* refers to a claim of legitimacy, the justification and right to exercise that power. Mullins (2020) while a mob believes they may hold power to punish a criminal, people who believe in the rule of law consider that only a court of law has the authority to punish a criminal. As Mullins (2020) suggests, if a mob becomes legitimate, and ascends to power, twist then destroy laws, implements their own, and then acts against that former mob's categorized enemies - this is now a basic sketch of the Nazis. Mullins (2020) further noted that

- Power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his or her own will - Max Weber

- A has power over B to the extent that he or she can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do - Robert Dahl

Does Mullins' interpretation of Weber and Dahl then suggest people blindly follow authority because of power? Or does following authority also come from a place of fear?

When using chronology and historical constructs that demonstrated how historical antisemitism, combined with the advent of the Nazi party, and then the passage of the subsequent Nuremberg Laws, how these all came together with the result emerging as one of the most racist, horrifically violent regimes in history. The Holocaust was absolutely not inevitable.

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In our next essay, Emily Minerof writes on how the Nuremberg Laws made the Holocaust possible.

How the Nuremberg Laws Led to the Holocaust

Emily Minerof

Imagine waking up on September 15th, 1935 and you no longer have the same basic human rights as your neighbor that you've lived next to for years, shared meals with, and let your children grow up with. The Nuremberg Laws just passed, making the Jews and other targeted minority groups second-class citizens in their home country (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2000). The Nuremberg Laws prevented Jews from marrying/having children with Germans in order to physically progress the Aryan race and dehumanize the Jews. Implementing these laws was "a major step in clarifying racial policy and removing Jewish influences from Aryan society" (Jewish Virtual Library, n.d.a). What could have been a semi-normal morning in post-World War One (WWI) Germany, became the day the Holocaust was made legal. The enactment of the Nuremberg Laws can be considered a definitive act of Nazi intent to perpetrate the

Holocaust because they were the racially discriminative laws that took away the German Citizenship of Jews. This law set a baseline for more dehumanizing laws to be created regarding Jews.

The authors of the Nuremberg Laws wrote them with the knowledge that the Holocaust would be perpetrated but were not necessarily aware of the end result of mass extermination. More specifically, they were aware of the purification of the Aryan race rather than the plan to exterminate the Jews. The authors knew that these laws would racially classify and isolate the Jews. When author Wilhelm Stuckart was made aware that the Nuremberg Laws were ignored in the Final Solution, he "pointed out the bureaucratic problems of such a radical course of action - insisting that mandatory sterilization would be a better option in preserving the "spirit" of the Nuremberg laws" (Jewish Virtual Library, n.d.b). This evidence shows that Stuckart knew the severity of the laws he had helped write but certainly did not foresee or agree with the Final Solution being executed. Despite the knowledge of the authors and whether they willingly perpetrated the Holocaust, Adolf Hitler told them otherwise.

It is noted that “Hitler claimed during a Reichstag session that the Nuremberg Laws would actually help the Jews by creating “a level ground on which the German people may find a tolerable relation with the Jewish people.” Hitler’s statement was a “blatant deception, aimed at the outside world” (Jewish Virtual Library, n.d.a). Although the authors may have been aware that Hitler’s “outside” motives were not exactly true, they may have not been made aware that Hitler would use the Nuremberg Laws as a “precursor to other more degrading decrees” in the future” (Jewish Virtual Library, n.d.a). This can be seen when authors “Stuckart and his assistant, Dr. Hans Globke, in the RMI [Reich Ministry of the Interior] claimed that Nazi racial laws differed little from Jewish law: “The German people want to keep their blood pure and their culture together just like the Jews have done since the prophet Ezra ordered them to do so” (Jewish Virtual Library, n.d.a). This explanation provided by the authors shows no indication of mass extermination of the Jews, but only to create an Aryan race. Despite the knowledge of Hitler’s ideologies outlined in his book *Mein Kampf,* the Final Solution was not discussed until

1941, and “even in his inner circle, Hitler could never bring himself to speak with outright frankness about the killing of Jews” (Kershaw, 2011, p. 29).

Unfortunately, the Nuremberg Laws were not the first set of laws/clauses that targeted Jews in their own country. Since the end of WWI, Jews have been the scapegoat for the loss of the war during the end of the Weimar Republic and the start of the Third Reich. These laws/clauses paved the foundation and societal acceptance for the Nuremberg Laws to exist. When Hitler was still Chancellor under President Paul von Hindenburg, an emergency clause known as the Reichstag Fire Decree took away the basic rights of citizens after the Reichstag building was “mysteriously” burnt down (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2000). Hitler’s rise to power required the political climate Germany displayed after the loss of the war. After WWI, the Weimar Republic democracy declined, Germany faced the repercussions of the loss of WWI and struggled financially due to an economic crisis. Hitler had established dictatorship after the Enabling Act was passed on March 23rd, 1933 (United States Holocaust

Memorial Museum, 2000). Thus, he became the Führer after he assumed presidency (Adele-Marie, 2018a). This meant that he had full dictatorship over Germany. A sense of German nationalism was weak among the people and they were desperate for any change, even if it exploited anti-Semitic ideologies.

Once Hitler had full power as *Führer*, nothing could stop him from doing what he wanted despite the illegalities this caused. The Nazi party began to boycott Jewish businesses in April of 1933. Over the next several months, laws were enacted that directly impacted the lives of Jews and other groups the Nazis targeted. Laws such as the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, Law on the Revocation of Naturalization, Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases, and the criminalization of gay acts among men were enacted (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2000). These laws: prevented Jews from having jobs, Gypsies of German citizenship, and legalized sterilization of the disabled which eventually led to the legal euthanasia of the terminally ill. Books by Jews were burned publicly to eliminate foreign influence

and protect the German sense of Nationalism (Adele-Marie, 2018a). Having ideas were no longer free, actions were no longer free, and you had to look a certain way. There were more than four hundred decrees and regulations that made the personal lives and public lives of Jews difficult during the first six years of Hitler's dictatorship (Adele-Marie, 2018c).

Hitler was able to create a society where these laws were considered "the norm" through excessive use of Nazi propaganda in varying forms and the incremental laws put into place over time. As each law passed, "the norm changed", and this partly explains why there was a general acceptance of them. The Nazi Party was able to dismantle democracy through a combination of political, economic, and emotional circumstances that all happened in a short, overlapping time period. The shared feeling of a lack of German nationalism after the loss of the war created a loss of faith in the Weimar Republic democracy. Hitler started the Nazi Party in 1919 but failed miserably for almost ten years before slowly gaining power. Many people did not see the Nazi Party as a threat. Hitler emphasized a strong sense of nationalism, and the German

people wanted that back. This is one reason why people were willing to give up their personal freedoms. Another reason is that Hitler made specific groups of people, such as women, feel important to the cause, for example, giving women the right to vote in a time where women were considered inferior to men (Boak, 2003). In terms of importance, the diffusion of responsibility greatly contributed to the lack of response from other religious groups and countries and what they valued as important.

The narrative from *Defining a Jew* as referenced in Wendy Adele-Marie's online readings discusses the responsibility among Christians and their interpretation of their religion in regard to the Jews and other targeted groups during the Holocaust (Adele-Marie, 2018d). Since the Church defined the "love thy neighbor" commandment to only extend to other baptized Christians, Christians felt guilty that they didn't help the Jews. For the most part, the response from other countries and groups was relatively similar in that they did nothing, but for different reasons. Although Dietrich Goldschmidt admits why German Christians "couldn't"

feel responsible for helping the Jews, that did not stop the French Protestant Congregation in the Village of Le Chambon sur Lignon. Many people in this community felt it was their Christian obligation to save the Jews, their neighbors in need, and risked their lives to do so (Yad Vashem, n.d.).

In terms of Pope Pius XII and his non-response to the Holocaust as a religious figure, "he wanted to play peacemaker during the war… To safeguard his credentials for such a role… to preserve the Vatican City's status as an independent state and neutral government" (Phayer, 2011, p. 243). What this really meant was that no stance was taken, and with the influence of the Church, many more Jewish lives could have been saved if the Church simply involved itself with politics. This was Goldschmidt's initial finding; the Church did not involve itself in politics and therefore it was not in any way responsible for attempting to save the Jews. Overall, the Church could have had a significant influence on the number of bystanders during the Holocaust.

Most of the world failed to react because other countries could not comprehend the severity of what was happening in Nazi-occupied Europe. There had never been an event "in recent European history for the murderous character of German National Socialism" which left responders caught off guard and unprepared (Laqueur, 2011, p. 253). It is also believed that despite knowing information about the Final Solution, it was not believed (Laqueur, 2011). In the Evian Conference convened by American President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR), thirty-two countries were represented, and most did not change their immigration policies to help Jews emigrate from Eastern Europe (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2000). FDR chose to be cautious because "Germany still owed American investors billions of dollars, borrowed to pay World War I reparations, and Roosevelt did not believe that the United States should intervene in the internal affairs of another country" (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.). Despite the changes made to this opinion later, it was clear that the existence of Jews in Europe was not the interest of FDR.

Hitler created the Nuremberg Laws with the intention to create more laws. In order “to create his homogeneous and harmonious Aryan society, Hitler had first to discard the Jews, a “people” incompatible with “true Germans.” The Nuremberg Laws helped Hitler take the first step toward getting rid of “these parasites” and imposing racial conformity on society” (Jewish Virtual Library, n.d.a). The result of the Nuremberg Laws were more laws that defined a Jew. Wendy Adele-Marie touches on "The Ten Stages of Genocide" by Dr. Gregory H. Stanton in her online readings. The Ten Stages of Genocide outline the steps in the order necessary to perpetrate genocide, and the first step is “Classification” (Adele-Marie, 2018b). Classification in these terms defined an “us” and “them”. Jews were classified as “them” by being forced to identify themselves by the yellow “Jude” patch on their clothes. The Nuremberg Laws inevitably opened the doors for laws to be made to determine what a Jew was. For the Nuremberg Laws to outlaw interracial marriage among Jews and Germans, “Jew” had to be defined. The chart created by the Nazis intended to classify the Jews from the “Aryan” ideal by any means

necessary, even if it was not physically observable. People were defined as mixed-race Jews, known as “Mischlings,” based upon their grandparents and parents’ “race” (Adele Marie, 2018d). Today, many might question why people simply listened to this Nazi propaganda and how it is even reasonable to classify people based on removed generations of their family.

The Nuremberg Laws perpetuated the Holocaust by creating the foundation for legal persecution of the Jews via obedience. Those who complied yet disagreed with these laws were vital to the dehumanization of the Jews because nothing was being done to actively save the Jews. In the following statement, “Obedience to law was the main reason why Germans and their allies killed Jews and others during the Holocaust” this means that simply not negating the law was violent towards the Jews. People who did not actively contribute to resistance, whether it was violent or non-violent participated in compliance with the law. Although it is not as simple as resisting or complying, but rather risking fatal consequences in order to potentially save the lives of others. The diffusion of responsibility plays a crucial role in the

Holocaust and the obedience of Nazi Germany. The more people who complied with the laws, the less responsible each individual felt for the atrocities that were occurring. Metaphorically, the Nuremberg Laws can be considered the gust of wind that pushed the tumbleweed. These laws put a foot in the door for the future of Jews to be terrorized, and eventually victims in a mass extermination. Without the Nuremberg Laws, it is uncertain that the ultimate consequence Final Solution of the Holocaust would have been permitted.

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Chapter Five: Children and the Holocaust

Children and the Holocaust: An Introduction

Wendy Adele-Marie

From 1933-1945, the Nazis murdered 1.5 million Jewish children under the age of sixteen. The Nazis were relentless in their torture and murder of Jewish children. Using women, National Socialism wanted to eliminate, "within a hundred years, the dark German type by mating them with blonde women" in order to create a super race of 'racially' pure, blonde haired, blue eyed people (Toland, 1976, p. 764). Therefore, Jewish children were targeted for death.

For pure Germanic blood to survive, the Nazi regime established a hundred-year plan, conceived in part by Heinrich Himmler, Hitler's *Reichsführer, SS*. Himmler established "*Lebensborn* [Spring of Life], an SS maternity organization whose main function was to adopt racially suitable children for childless SS families and to assist racially sound unwed mothers and their children" (Toland, 1976, p. 764). Children who matched racial Aryan tenets, with the hopes of creating the blonde super race,

were stolen and given to SS families to raise (Malone, 2010, para. 2). The Nazis kidnapped 12,000 children who were given to SS families to raise; these innocent children were forced to become part of a racial experiment to create a superior Aryan race (Malone, 2010, para. 2).

Lebensborn was also described as "stud farms where SS men and suitable young women were mated to breed a master race." (Toland, 1976, p. 764). A government that encouraged fertility in such a way, and used women to achieve racial goals certainly did not view women in an egalitarian fashion, nor were full civil and political rights for them promoted. Propaganda, literature, and film helped support these genocidal constructs. The world needed to do more to help children. The Kindertransport was one such mission to save Jewish children from certain death.

Precious few children survived, as Rabbi Michael Davis discusses in the incredible story of how his mother escaped certain death. Maria Anna Mariani writes about perhaps one of the most well-known writers, and, unfortunately, victims of the Nazis, Anne Frank. Mariani carefully considers Holocaust memory in her essay.

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Here, we have a critical essay by Rabbi Michael Davis, writing on the *Kindertransport*, and how this mission saved thousands of Jewish children from certain death.

Holocaust Memory: The *Kindertransport*

Rabbi Michael Davis

The *Kindertransport* is the story of the dramatic rescue of Jewish children from Nazi Europe on the eve of WWII, racing against the clock and with a fantastic outcome. As a result of the *Kindertransport* 10,000 Jewish children survived the Holocaust. Without the *Kindertransport*, these children would almost certainly have perished along with the 1,500,000 other minors murdered in the Nazi killing centers. In the last twenty years, awards bestowed on participants and books have been published by survivors. A film version starring Judi Dench won an Oscar.

What was the *Kindertransport*?

At the end of 1938, the Jewish citizens of Nazi lands faced unprecedented harassment and outright violence from their fellow countrymen. Nazi authorities unleashed their uniformed militias on their fellow Jewish citizens. Faced with this betrayal by their

countrymen, German-speaking Jews sought ways out.

But the world was preparing for a world war that was looming; refugees were not welcome. A public campaign was launched in England and the British Parliament admitted thousands of unaccompanied Jewish children to the United Kingdom - so long as there were British foster families ready to assume responsibility for them. As desperate parents sent their children to the homes of strangers in a foreign land, they told their children - and themselves: this separation is only temporary, only until all this blows over.

However, as we know, with few exceptions, these parents did not survive the Holocaust. But their children, safe in England, did. Eighty years later, hundreds of thousands of their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are alive today thanks to the Kindertransport.

I am one of that next generation. My mother had just turned 7 years old, when in late December 1938, she and her two older sisters kissed their mother Rosa goodbye at the Vienna train station. It was the last time they would see her. Under the hostile

gaze of Nazi police, the sisters boarded the train headed north to Holland and on to ferries to cross the English Channel.

My maternal grandfather, had already escaped Nazi Austria to Belgium. In early November 1938, a red sports car with a Nazi officer and driver drew up to the family's business, a delicatessen. A truckload of Nazi police followed. They had come to take away the Jewish men. My mother watched from high up in the family's apartment across the street. As the Nazis entered the shop through the front door, David slipped out of the delicatessen's back door. Rosa told the men that her husband was away on business. They threatened to seize her daughter who was working with her as a hostage. Meanwhile, David hid in the apartment building's laundry room up in the attic.

Several days later on the night of November 9, the Nazis torched synagogues across Germany and Austria. This was *Kristallnacht* [the November Pogrom, or Night of Broken Glass]. The nearby synagogue went up in flames and the sparks threatened to ignite the apartment building's roof. That was when David decided it was no longer safe to hide there. He fled Vienna to join

his brother in Antwerp, Belgium.

At the end of December 1938, after she sent off the girls to England, Rosa too got out of Austria, travelling through Germany to join her husband in Antwerp. She was accompanied by her youngest child, Michael (whom I am named after). At five years old, he was too young to be sent away to England with his sisters.

The Nazis famously kept meticulous records of their crimes. There's a record of a transport in 1942 from Antwerp to Auschwitz. Rosa is listed there as are her son Michael and an infant daughter, Charlotte, born to David and Rosa after the Nazis occupied Belgium. There is another entry in the Nazis' log recording that transport's arrival in Auschwitz two days later. But in this entry, Rosa is missing. She had died in one of the cattle cars. On arrival in Auschwitz, 7-year-old Michael and 18-month-old Charlotte were immediately taken to the killing center at Birkenau to be murdered.

Meanwhile in England, the three sisters were assigned to Jewish foster homes. Following their arrival and for the next 18 months, Rosa continued to write to her three daughters

from Antwerp. This ended in May 1940 when the German army reached Belgium and cut off shipping routes and postal delivery to England.

The girls stayed in touch by corresponding with each other with handwritten letters. The handwritten letters my mother wrote to her older sister throughout the war years tell their own story. Within the space of a few months of arriving in England, the angular Gothic handwriting she had learned in school in Vienna morphs into the rounded letters of an English schoolgirl. Her German gives way to English. Within a few letters, the only German she still had was the farewell: *viele grusse* [many greetings]. It was heartbreaking to read one of my mother's letters to her older sister, Ilse: "Mami wrote me in German but I don't understand it anymore."

Even as the *Kindertransport* children and their foster families waited for the war to end and the promised reunion with their biological parents, the children became assimilated into English ways. Like immigrants the world over, the Jewish refugees were expected to be grateful and to just fit in. My mother felt the

shame of being “a refugee girl.”

My mother did forget, at least outwardly. She became British, she married and had her own family. She never spoke about her childhood experiences to me or my siblings. She wasn’t in touch with her fellow refugees.

This changed suddenly in 1988. London-based Bertha Leverton was the first to break the silence when she issued a call for the first reunion of the *Kindertransport* survivors. For Bertha, the turning point was seeing her 14-year-old granddaughter. It dawned on her that that was exactly how old she had been when she said goodbye to her parents in Munich, Germany.

At that first *Kindertransport* reunion in London in 1989, my mother reconnected with people she hadn’t seen in fifty years. The *Kindertransport* continued to gather annually. Friendships were rekindled. My mother became involved in the *Kindertransport* organization.

The “*Kinde*r” as they affectionately called each other no longer carried the shame of being refugees living off the kindness of strangers. They were mature, accomplished adults, truly grateful

to their adopted homeland, proud of having made it.

When the *Kinder* started to tell their story in public it was half a century and more after the Holocaust. The generation of adult Holocaust survivors - those who had been imprisoned in the concentration camps or survived the war in Europe in other ways - was dying out. In my work as a rabbi, we were finding it increasingly hard to find Holocaust survivors who could speak about their story. So, the *Kindertransport* and the "hidden children" inherited the role of Holocaust storyteller, teaching children and adults about what had happened.

Now, as my mother ages, the task of telling the story has devolved to the next generation, including me. I have told the story at the Illinois Holocaust Museum and in various synagogues. When I tell my Mother's story, I marvel at the logistical nightmare of organizing and transporting this precious cargo across hostile borders; the herculean task of mobilizing public figures in England to get Parliament to accept the children; and all the Jewish and other families who took in a refugee child when their own future was so precarious.

One detail that stood out for me was the particular selflessness of the adult chaperones, those German Jews who accompanied the transports of children from Nazi territory to safe harbor in England. These Jewish adults were sworn to return home after delivering their charges. The temptation to remain in England must have been great indeed. But the penalty for violating the agreement with the British government could have jeopardized the entire *Kindertransport* project: it was children only. So, the chaperones did go back to continental Europe to take their chances in what would, in a few short years, would become the Holocaust.

I also wonder at what motivated people to devote themselves to the *Kindertransport*. Some were established activists, others were Jewish communal leaders like Rabbi Solomon Schonfeld, the son-on-law of the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom. But some did not get involved in any similar activity either before or after the *Kindertransport* like the young businessman Nicolas Winton, who was later knighted by the Queen for his leadership of the *Kindertransport*.

Finally, there are the untold stories of the *Kindertransport*.

Yes, it was a phenomenal success story. And yet: most of these children never saw their parents and other family again. The lucky few parents who somehow survived the Nazi concentration camps and war met a much older child or even young adult, one who had changed beyond recognition during the seven years of separation growing with another family in a foreign language and culture. The child whose dream it was to fit in and shed the stigma of "Jewish refugee" now had "Holocaust survivor" parents who spoke English with a heavy accent staring out again in this new post-war world.

Meanwhile, the *Kinder* had endured the Blitz and other deprivations of war. Everything was rationed in wartime Britain. My mother remembers going to bed hungry. The children's wellbeing was entirely in the hands of the foster parents. There were no social workers to monitor the families. The children had no flesh and blood relatives to look out for them. Some children truly became equal members of their foster family, others were not so fortunate.

I wouldn't be alive today without the kindness, grit, bravery and effectiveness of the people of the *Kindertransport*, the

selfless courage and foresight of grandparents I never met, the generosity of the British government and the Jewish foster families that took my mother in and my mother's resilience under great hardship. Also, I wonder what the impact of all these events had on my mother and our family.

As I write this in 2021, the *Kinder* are a dwindling group. The youngest of them is approaching 90 years old. But the community of memory they established by telling their story continues to expand in widening circles. The experience of being a child refugee separated from one's parents is sadly a universal one, as we know all too well here in the U.S. As a parent myself, I am reminded of how precious and fragile a child is. This is not an easy story to tell but it is an important one to know. Amidst the incomprehensible, dehumanizing bestiality of the Holocaust, the *Kindertransport* is a beacon of sanity, kindness and courage. It is one example of the triumph of humanity against all odds.

Further reading/viewing:

In the past twenty years since the *Kindertransport* story became known, a plethora of materials have been published. A

good place to start is one of the first such works, the documentary *Into the Arms of Strangers* (2000) Warner Bros starring Judi Dench. The documentary is based on the book by the same name that is worth reading in its own right. The book, *Into the Arms of Strangers* is by Mark Jonathan Harris and Deborah Oppenheimer. Also, *The Children of Willesden Lane* (2003) Grand Central Publishing by Mona Gollabek and Lee Cohen. A recent, scholarly book that goes into the complicated consequences of the Kindertransport that I alluded to is *The Kindertransport - Contesting Memory* by Jennifer Craig-Norton, published by Indiana University Press in 2019.

In considering children of the Holocaust, often the first person that comes to mind is Anne Frank. Here University of Chicago professor Maria Anna Mariani offers a unique literary analysis on the "afterlives" and interpretations of Anne. Editor's note: due to the length of citations, the original format was left as the author constructed them. Changes were not made as to not lose context. The author's opinions expressed are her own, and to some readers, may present a controversial analysis of Anne Frank.

On the Posthumous Life of Anne Frank

Maria Anna Mariani

The article reflects on the literary afterlives of Anne Frank, on the global circulation of the diary, and on the thorny issue of its copyright. Re-examining the complex editorial history in light of new theoretical concerns regarding universalism and world literature, I ask, not only what is an author, but what is an editor and—perhaps most crucially—what responsibilities does this latter have toward the witness.

I want to begin this essay about the history of a text by contemplating an image (this book is no longer in print):

A girl—almost a Barbie doll—with a dreamy look, her lips tracing out the profile of a heart, her teenage bust swaddled in a jean jacket. To find out who she is, we have to decipher those signs—the syllables above the girl's elbow and across her shirt. They read: "A Jewish girl speaking her mind. *Anne's Diary.* Growth of the hearth of an adolescent girl, sharp criticism of the adult's world, admirable courage to "firmly" overcome difficulties without allowing them to break her." [1]

[1] Hwang Hyong-Kyu is the translator of this particular edition of the *Diary of Anne Frank*, published by Samwon, which no longer exists. This book cover does not represent the standard way in which *The Diary of Anne Frank* circulates in Korea, and it has been intensely criticized by Koreans themselves (especially in private blogs). Nonetheless, the book cover interests me as a symptom, because it represents the apex of a process of depersonalization of Anne's story and image—as I will argue in my article. I would like to thank Kyeong-Hee Choi, Professor of Modern Korean Literature at the University of Chicago, for finding out precious bibliographical information about this edition of the *Diary*.

Anne's Diary. Just Anne, without Frank. Stripped to the bare absolute of a first name, this is one of the ways in which the most famous diary in history circulated in South Korea. But what is startling about this illustration is not the absence of a family name. It is the blonde hair, the absent-minded expression, the lipstick and the jean jacket that provoke incredulity, indignation, or some other emotion as well. But instead of allowing these emotions to coagulate into instantaneous forms of judgment, I would like to try now to understand. I would like to try to understand what made the conception of this idea and then its unimpeded circulation possible. I would like to reflect on Anne Frank using this unexpected reproduction of her as my point of departure.

Let us take another look at it. The most striking aspect is the complete removal of identifying features, or even human traits: what we see is a neutral face, with no marks of individuality, no deviations from the norm. It is a depersonalized, almost plastic face. It could be a diagram or the idea of a face. The lack of a family name only accentuates this abstraction of personal traits:

Anne has no ancestry, no roots. She is *a* girl—and in this case the indefinite article signals what she has most in common with all other girls.

How did this complete erasure of individual data, this transformation of Anne Frank into a generic young girl, become possible? The book cover is not an isolated case: rather, it is the apex in a process of candy-coated rarefication of the image and words of Anne Frank. In Japan, for example, the diary is read primarily as an emblematic representation of adolescence, to the point that "Anne Frank" is the code name that young girls whisper to each other when they get their first period.[2] But even when the diary is read without isolating its adolescent aspect, and hence, more fully and completely as a testimony of the Shoah, there is still something in its pages that irresistibly invites the reader to identification. What is it? Why is it so easy to submerge ourselves in Anne Frank?

[2] On the Japanese reception of the *Diary*, see "Why are the Japanese so Fascinated with Anne Frank?" in *Haaretz*, January 22, 2014, http://www.haaretz.com/jewish/news/1.569938, and "Japanese Retain Fascination with Anne Frank" in *Deutsche Welle*, March 2, 2015, http://www.dw.com/en/japanese-retain-fascination-with-anne-frank/a-18284457.

A lot of people have wondered about this temptation. Philip Roth is one of them. In *The Ghost Writer* he portrays an Anne Frank who somehow managed to survive the concentration camps. This particular Anne is the projection of Zuckerman's fantasies—the narrator-character whose first appearance as Roth's alter-ego was in 1979 in *The Ghost Writer*. Zuckerman imagines that a mysterious girl—a femme fatale, he calls her—encountered at the house of an established writer is the Anne Frank of the diary. While he scrutinizes the angles of a female face now almost in its twenties, Zuckerman fantasizes a fate for the character that extends well beyond the diary's ending. After having witnessed the deaths of her mother and sister at Bergen-Belsen, Anne decides that it would be better "to put an ocean the size of the Atlantic between herself and what she needed to forget."[3] She chooses America as

[3] Philip Roth, *The Ghost Writer* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1979), 126. For a critical reading of this novel, see Francine Prose, *Anne Frank: The Book, The Life, The Afterlife* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009); Aimee Pozorski, "How to Tell a True Ghost Story: *The Ghost Writer* and the case of Anne Frank," in *Philip Roth: New Perspectives on an American Author*, ed. David Parker Royal, with a foreword by Daniel Walden (Westport: Praeger Publisher, 2005), 89-103; Sara R. Horovitz, "Literary Afterlives of Anne Frank," in *Anne Frank Unbound: Media, Imagination, Memory*, ed. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Jeffrey Shandler (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2012), 215-254.

her new homeland—and there she lives a segment of her life without history and without memory, until one day, in a dentist's waiting room, she comes across an article in *Time* magazine about her father: Otto Frank, the only surviving member of the family. Reading the article, she learns that she is the author of a famous diary, which she desperately tries to get a copy of: the book is apparently unfindable.

When she finally manages to get her hands on one, it seems to her as if its weight, lying in the folds of her American girl's skirt, "was her survival itself. *Van Anne Frank*. Her book. Hers."[4] Mesmerized by Zuckerman's imaginings, we watch her seated on a bench, engrossed in the rereading of her own diary—her inked survival—and becoming the privileged interpreter of herself. Reflecting on the diary, Anne realizes that the description of her Jewishness that she has produced is quite colorless. Like in this section from the diary: "my first wish after the war is to become a Dutch citizen. I love the Dutch, I love this country, I love the

[4] Roth, *The Ghost Writer*, 134.

language, and I want to work here."[5] The author depicted by Roth who reads her own work understands that it was precisely this absence of Jewish traditions, this insistence on assimilation, that fueled the extraordinary success of the book and its ability to become an emotional mirror for anyone who dives between its lines.

Nestled inside Roth's novel we thus find a preliminary hypothesis regarding the remarkable universalization of Anne, one that reveals an unexpected opposition : in this instance, universal is the antithesis of Jewish. But the reason the Franks came to symbolize "the people next door"[6] in the collective imagination is not only because of how they are represented as a perfectly assimilated family. There is another factor at work that encourages

[5] Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition*, ed. Otto H. Frank and Mirjam Pressler, trans. Susan Masotty (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 263.

[6] See Meyer Levin's review of the *Diary*, published in *The New York Times* on June 15, 1952. After the War, Meyer wrote a play based on the *Diary*, but it was not produced (according to Levin, who recounts his frustrated reaction to this refusal in his autobiography *The Obsession*, the decision was based on his "excessively Jewish" approach to the *Diary*). See Meyer Levin, *The Obsession* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974). On Levin's "obsession" with Anne Frank, see Lawrence Graver, *An obsession with Anne Frank: Meyer Levin and The Diary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), and Francine Prose, "The Play," in *Anne Frank: The Book, The Life, The Afterlife*, 177-223.

untrammeled identification: the patina of hopeful optimism that envelops the diary. "I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart,"[7] reads the most famous sentence written by Anne Frank, played up and canonized by the prestige of a motto. This is the sentence charged with encapsulating the diary's message and appearing on the back jacket of every edition, proliferating into the more than sixty languages of the countries where it has been translated, including Italy, of course, where the preface to the first edition comes from the pen of Natalia Ginzburg.

Commenting on "the innocent voice that was silenced," she writes that "we stash away in our memory the trusting, untroubled vibration, the courageous goodness of this voice that has overcome death."[8] Before storing away hope, though, when we approach the diary, explains Ginzburg, we must keep in mind "it's tragic conclusion; without being able to linger on the specific moments that it describes, looking continuously beyond it."[9] While this may

[7] Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition*, 328.
[8] Natalia Ginzburg, preface to the first Italian edition of *Il diario di Anna Frank*, trans. Arrigo Vita (Torino: Einaudi 1959), xi.
[9] Ginzburg, preface to the first Italian edition of *Il diario di Anna Frank*, ix-x.

seem obvious, in reality it is an essential distinction. Because there are many who downplay the documentary value of the diary: it should not be read as a paradigmatic text about the Shoah because it represents a non-standard testimony. It is nothing but the chronicle of a crystallized fear that, in actuality, leaves out the true event: the deportation.[10] But the lacuna in the story is precisely what gives authenticity to this testimony, making it all the more precious and troubling, because that void at the end is the trace of Anne's failure to survive. Her words cannot be discredited because of their incompleteness, but rather valued all the more because of their eloquent partiality. The diary is a story of the truth, even though we know it is not the whole truth.

But let us go back to the optimism that crystallized into the emotional symbol of the diary. "I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart." I am repeating this sentence, which extols human tolerance and goodness no matter

[10] See at least Lawrence L. Langer, "The Uses-and Misuses-of a Young Girl's Diary: 'If Anne Frank Could Return from among the Murdered, She Would Be Appaled,'" in *Anne Frank: Reflections on Her Life and Legacy,* ed. Hyman A. Enzer and Sandra Solotaroff-Enzer (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 203-206.

what, because it was the polemical target of a scathing article by Cynthia Ozik.[11] Asking why it was specifically those words, and not others, that were destined to frame the text's reception, Ozik criticizes the theater version based on the diary, which domesticates the story of the events for the stage, putting redemption and forgiveness at the forefront. In Ozik's view, the optimism of the theatrical version is so extreme that it inspired a comment by Natalie Portman, who made her Broadway debut in 1997 in the role of Anne Frank: "she's fun, she's hopeful, and she's a happy person," the actress is reported to have said in an interview given at the end of the show.

For Ozik, the candy-coated rarefication of Anne Frank was not set into motion purely by the playwrights of the Broadway show, guided by the idea of smoothing down Anne's individual features to the point of making her a disembodied being. For Ozik, the person responsible first and foremost for this process was Otto Frank, her father, the one who survived: the only one to survive.

[11] Cynthia Ozick, "Who Owns Anne Frank?" in *Quarrel and Quandary* (New York: Vintage, 2000), 74-102.

Before submitting his daughter's manuscript to the publisher, Otto Frank apparently made a substantial number of cuts to purge the text of its most disturbing elements: the discovery of sexuality, her inflammatory comments about her mother, and the darker tones of Anne's reflections. Part of his strategy was to emphasize the element of assimilation in the hope that the diary would gain a wider audience.

What was Otto's role in the text's reception? Did he really censor the diary for profit motives or, as has been suggested at times, even prompted by an internalized antisemitism? Establishing the father's role in the composition of the diary became a question of legal urgency in 2016, because it determines when the copyright on the text expires. The Anne Frank Funds Foundation[12] has recently announced that Otto Frank is the true coauthor of his daughter's manuscript, a decision that has stunned everyone, and that considerably extends the copyright on the diary past its original date. The period will henceforth no longer be

[12] Founded in Basel in 1963, the AFF has acted as Otto Frank's universal heir since his death in 1980; its purpose is to promote his daughter's writings and protect them from illegal uses.

calculated starting from Anne's death, but rather from 1980, the year of Otto's death.[13] There is no lack of controversy surrounding this decision: it would appear that it is nothing but a strategy on the part of the Anne Frank foundation to police the manuscript's content and ensure that they continue to receive the royalties that it generates.

From censor to coauthor: that is quite a difference. Otto's new status as coauthor is astonishing; it is so astonishing that it calls for a patient, close examination of the two philological editions of the diary. Yes, two: the critical edition published in 1986, made indispensable by accusations denying the authenticity of the text, labeling it a fraud; and the so-called definitive edition of 1991—the only one approved by the Anne Frank Funds.[14] In

[13] In the United States the copyright will in any case expire in 2047, because American law protects works for 95 years starting from the date of their first publication, which took place in 1952.

[14] Here are the bibliographical references:

- *The Diary of Anne Frank: The Critical Edition*. Prepared by the Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation. David Barnouw and Gerrold van der Stroom, eds. Trans. Arnold J. Pomerans and B. M. Mooyaart-Doubleday (New York: Doubleday, 1989). See also the *Revised Critical Edition*, published in 2003.
- *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition*, ed. Otto H. Frank and Mirjam Pressler, trans. Susan Masotty (New York: Doubleday, 1995).

Italian bookstores, this approval is made visible by a scarlet band around every copy of the diary on display. This seal of approval transformed into a paratext guarantees the authenticity of the book on sale—a singular case. Both the editions show us that the diary is a layered work; but while the critical edition limits itself to setting out the progressive drafts of the diary, the definitive edition also gives us a new version of the text that is different from the one published in 1947 when the diary first appeared in print.

The new, definitive version is certainly longer (by 25%) and the expansion is due to the reintegration of passages that were missing from the first publication. Cynthia Ozik and many others viewed this reintegration as a much-needed restoration of previously censored materials. But, in reality, a careful comparison between the various editions of the work—of which there are four (*a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*), the beginnings of a philological alphabet—points to a different assessment.[15] Studying the genesis of this text may

[15] For a philological analysis of the *Diary*, see also Philippe Lejeune, "How Anne Frank Rewrote the Diary of Anne Frank," in *On Diary*, ed. Jeremy D. Popkin and Julie Rak, trans. Katherine Durnin (Manoa: University of Hawai's Press, 2009), 237-267; Prose, 'The Book, Part II," in *Anne Frank: The Book, The Life, The Afterlife*, 89-156; Sally Charnow, "Critical Thinking: Scholars Reread the Diary," in *Anne Frank Unbound: Media, Imagination, Memory*, 291-309; Nigel A.

have a disorienting effect, because we are all used to reading the diary as a natural, spontaneous product of Anne Frank's pen. When we read a diary, we imagine that it is an immediate chronicle of everyday events and thoughts, that the traces of its dates have spontaneously transferred the flow of time onto the page, without any retouching. The features of the diary genre, exhaustively inventoried by Philipp Lejeune,[16] are as follows: cryptic allusions, contents that are redundant and vague, a presentation that is fragmentary and confused.

The diary is diametrically opposed to the book: it belongs instead to the order of manuscripts—a manuscript that is eternal, eternally suspended, ignorant of its end and allergic to any retouching. If this is the way things are, an authentic diary, meaning an honest one, is unpublishable. Even more than that: it is unreadable. Anne Frank's diary was no exception: "My writings all mixed up, I'm jumping from one thing to another, and sometimes I

Caplan, "Revisiting the *Diary*: Rereading Anne Frank's Rewriting," in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Anne Frank's The Diary of Anne Frank-New Edition*, ed. and with and introduction by Harold Bloom (New York: Bloom's Literary Criticism, 2010), 83-100.

[16] Lejeune, "Composing a Diary", in *On Diary*, 168-175.

seriously doubt whether anyone will ever be interested in this drivel. They'll probably call it 'The Musings of an Ugly Duckling.'"[17] The diary was thus a raw proliferation of notes – this was how it remained until 1944, when Anne listening furtively in her hideout heard a radio announcement that encouraged listeners, once the war was over, to publish all personal writings conceived during the years of fear, promoting the creation of a popular, private archive for the benefit of posterity. This announcement gave Anne the momentum to transform her diary into a book, into a text no longer governed by the idiosyncratic, casual laws of someone doing something purely for herself, but rather of something designed for the gaze and judgment of a public. Her instinctive idea was to turn it into a detective novel, a narrative capable of converting the repetitive, documentary flow of the original notes into a text electrified by a gripping plot.

She then started to rewrite the diary, from the beginning, and in the new version her style became more controlled and mature, more evocative and descriptive. And yet, the project of

[17] Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition*, 261.

writing a novel—a work of fiction—did not really take shape: the rewriting instead preserved the essence and structure of the diary. Anne consistently manipulates the original notes, but she does so primarily by condensing and reshaping the information conveyed and by rearranging the dates so that they line up more uniformly in time, as if each day prompted a new observation.

She thus injected a "diary effect," an *effete de journal*,[18] into the new writing, mimicking the contours of the diary, and restraining the spontaneous impulse of the first notes. This was so successful that the new version (*b*, philologically speaking) appears to be more authentic—more honest, as Lejeune would say—than the original one (*a*). The wish for future readers to see her pages inspired the girl to emphasize some parts—especially the desire for assimilation—and to eliminate others: mischievous remarks about her family, the most intimate moments of her love story with Peter, the most uninhibited comments about her sexuality. Anne was thus the first person to censor herself—or to edit herself. A careful philological comparison actually

[18] Lejeune, "The Diary as 'Antifiction,'" in *On Diary*, 207.

demonstrates that the appropriate term for describing the passage from version *a* to version *b* is that of editing: a sophisticated, conscious self-editing.

And now we come to the father: when Otto Frank finished reading the diary that had been preserved from destruction by the hands of Miep Gies, he found two different editions of his daughter's text, both of which were dissatisfying: Anne did not actually manage to rewrite draft *b*, destined for the public, in its entirety; it thus covers a shorter period of time than draft *a*. In preparing the version of the text to be given to the publisher (indicated by the letter *c*), Otto was thus forced to meld together these two drafts. He then thought that it would be a good idea to reintroduce all the parts about Anne's love story that she had expunged out of embarrassment and to protect Peter's anonymity.

Although Otto reintroduced several passages that were streaked with sentimental tones, he also made further cuts: he eliminated off-putting passages about Anne's mother and expunged a part that burns with feminist passion. So what is Otto Frank's role in the composition of the text? Censor? Coauthor?

Curator? Editor? According to some, including Philippe Lejeune and Francine Prose, what this father performed was an excellent job of editing, completing and refining the work that Anne had started on her own. He might reasonably be criticized for not having declared the corrective work that he had performed: for having presented the edition of the diary as a product rather than a process. Could he have done otherwise? Perhaps he might have, even though the diary's success seems to be intimately connected to this philological secretiveness of his, which associated the writings exclusively to his daughter's name, passing over his own contribution and neutralizing his own self.

This affair raises some theoretical issues about the visibility and power of the editor, who in this case acquires a pair of synonyms that are difficult to reconcile and that appear to belong to different lexical classes: censor and coauthor. The question to ask ourselves, then, is: what can an editor do? The myth of editing first appeared, perhaps, with Maxwell Perkins, the legendary editor of Hemingway and Fitzgerald. The editor is cast as a sort of hyper-reader, who acts on behalf of a community of readers working

together to achieve what it considers to be the best publishing outcome. What does 'best' mean in the context in which the diary was originally published? The reality that Otto Frank had to confront was limited by a series of constraints that were more ethical than esthetic in nature: most of his actions seem to have been motivated by a strategy that was quite common in the publishing world after the Second World War, a strategy dictated by a sense of emotional delicacy toward the collective psyche, which was not to be overly upset. (These were the years in Italy when Primo Levi's manuscript *If This is a Man* was rejected repeatedly – because it was too upsetting. Only a small publisher, De Silva, agreed to publish it for him, and in a limited number of copies.)[19]

[19] On the publishing vicissitudes of *If This Is a Man*, see Luisa Mangoni, *Pensare i libri. La casa editrice Einaudi dagli anni trenta agli anni sessanta* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri 1999); Carole Angier, *The Double Bond: The Life of Primo Levi* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux 2002); Ian Thomson, "Writing *If This Is a Man*," in *Primo Levi: The Austere Humanist*, edited by Joseph Farrell (New York: Peter Lang 2004), 156-157; Marco Belpoliti, "Perché *Se questo è un uomo* è stato respinto da Einaudi e da altri editori, ovvero perché è trascorso tanto tempo prima che fosse capito e apprezzato," in *Primo Levi di fronte e di profilo* (Milan: Guanda 2015), 111-121; Anna Baldini, "Primo Levi and the Italian Memory of the Shoah," in *Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History*, July 7, 2014.

Without an editor, does an author exist? Without editing, many fundamental works would never have been published and this would probably have been the fate of the diary, too, had Otto not intervened to sense the atmosphere of his times, positioning himself between the work and the public, acting as mediator, restorer, and even—yes—impresario. It is true that the diary falls under the realm of nonfiction, despite the rewriting that reshaped it, and when nonfiction is involved, the work of editing must be more disciplined and servile than ever. And yet I do not believe that Otto Frank violated the two fundamental precepts of the craft formulated by Maxwell Perkins, which go like this: "An editor should strive for anonymity" and "an editor at most releases energy... He creates nothing."[20] Otto Frank creates nothing, and the decision on the part of the Anna Frank Funds to consider him more than simply an editor, and even a coauthor of the diary, is puzzling.

[20] Quoted in Gavin James Bower, "The Age of Amazon still needs editors like Max Perkins," in *The Guardian*, October 4, 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2013/oct/04/age-amazon-editors-max-perkins. See also A. Scott Berg, *Max Perkins: Editor of Genius* (New York: Riverhead, 1997).

It is more than puzzling: the decision is truly disorienting, because now we are no longer authorized to read the version edited by the father (*c*), but exclusively the new definitive version (*d*), the only one approved by the Anne Frank Funds: "there is no other version of the diary that the world can know," pronounces Mirjam Pressler, the writer responsible for this new configuration of the text. "To restore Anne Frank's authentic voice," is the objective to which Mirjam Pressler aspires, and one of the ways she pursues it is to fill in all the gaps that the stratification of the editing opened up. The troubling aspect about this new version is how even Anne's self-editing has been neutralized: for Pressler the "true voice" of the girl supposedly resides in the totality of the original notes, in the uncensored, magmatic writing that spills out in the first draft. But doesn't Anne's authentic voice also reside in the lacunas?

The lacunas—the selection of information that carves out evocative spaces from between the lines—are just as capable and equally entitled to participate in representation as the lines that are traced out. By considering the spaces opened up by Anne as

cavities that swallow up the true, Pressler instead seems to condemn the concept of lacuna to its prime but not exclusive meaning of a geographic depression (from the Latin *lacus*: cavity in the earth). And that is not all: as Lejeune demonstrates, while Pressler cancels out the work of self-editing that had been required to smooth out the rough edges in the original contents, she welcomes the patient, intense syntactic and lexical work to which Anne dedicated herself in order to sublimate the stylistic crudeness of version *a*. The conception of the Pressler edition is thus contradictory, because it presupposes that the reader of today will appreciate Anne's boldness but will be put off by her original stylistic clumsiness.

In addition to denouncing the contradictions of a legal matter that concerns us today, this long exploration into the depths of the diary has shown us that the editing begun by Anne and continued by her father had contributed to the wide diffusion and circulation of the text. Its universalization was therefore premeditated: it arose from between the lines. "One single Anne Frank moves us more than the countless others who suffered just

as she did but whose faces have remained in the shadows. Perhaps it is better that way; if we were capable of taking in all the suffering of all those people, we would not be able to live."[21] This comes from *The Drowned and the Saved* by Primo Levi. Faces, writes Primo Levi. It is significant that he uses this word, materializing before our eyes a conglomerate of anonymous faces beside an endlessly reproduced single face, that of Anne Frank. The face of Anne Frank is a collective face; it is the face of the Shoah; it is the expressive vector of that event. The features of the girl absorb those of the anonymous faces, who in that oval recapture the possibility of a posthumous existence; just as the girl's words do, that by proxy also take on the drowned testimonies of the others, allowing them to survive.

Primo Levi's remark suggests that Anne Frank's pervasiveness is not solely attributable to her words: a crucial role is also played by her image, by her face. Why is this the case? What is special about her face? This, perhaps: it is the face of a

[21] Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (New York: Vintage International, 1988), 56.

little girl. Children are particularly iconic because they are abstract, undistorted: the impurities of identity and becoming have not yet accumulated on their hollow, malleable structure, which makes them ready to assume any contour or protuberance. Anne's face, as a child, is a surface onto which any face can be projected (the South Korean cover with which we started only takes this process to an extreme, generating a synthetic face without qualities that can be endlessly embodied.)[22]

The images of children lend themselves enormously to identification: they become a repository of empathic energy and offer themselves up continuously for reproduction, so much so that their evidence as documents is almost automatically converted into the fascination of icons. Identification —with an image or with a narrated series of events—is certainly not an innocuous process. It should be disciplined, without arriving at the point of dissolving the boundaries between the self and the non-self but participating

[22] On the iconicity of Anne Frank, see Brigitte Sion, "Anne Frank as Icon, from Human Rights to Holocaust Denial" and Daniel Belasco, "Suturing In: Anne Frank as Conceptual Model for Visual Art," both in *Anne Frank Unbound*, 193-215 and 254-265. See also Oren Baruch Stier, *Holocaust Icons*. *Symbolizing the Shoah in History and Memory* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2015).

in the experience of others with a degree of empathy that permits the inassimilable peculiarity of the other to be recognized. We are thoughtfully reminded of this by the most self-critical theoreticians of Trauma Studies, like Dominick LaCapra[23] and Marianne Hirsch,[24] who insists on the risk of indiscriminate appropriation specifically in thinking about Anne Frank and her attractive iconicity as a little girl: innocent, vulnerable, wise but also erotic.

Despite all the warnings to approach Anne's image with the appropriate emotional distance, and to read the diary without blurring the important areas of difference and alterity that permeate it, one can hardly remain unaware of how effortlessly this text circulates, disseminating the memory of Anne Frank and the Shoah in a space that by now is definitively globalized.[25] It is a space that

[23] Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001).
[24] Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory. Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).
[25] See Aleida Assmann, "The Holocaust: A Global Memory? Extensions and Limits of a New Memory Community," in *Memory in a Global Age. Discourses, Practices and Trajectories*, ed. Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad (New York: Palgrave Mcmillian, 2010), 79-97; Daniel Levy-Natan Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006); *Marking Evil: Holocaust Memory in the Global Age*, ed. Amos Goldberg and Haim Hazan (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015).

assimilates, levels and neutralizes—I am being overly blunt; but I do not take it back, since despite a few counter currents, homogenization is the tool that globalism deploys most readily. With the unlimited expansion of World Literature, the diary can now penetrate into the country most impermeable to globalization, an armored one that borders on the country that printed the book cover reproduced at the beginning of this paper: North Korea.

In 2004 a Dutch television was granted the truly exceptional permission to go into North Korean schools to document the pedagogical uses being made of the *Diary*.[26] What the journalists saw and heard there left them dumbfounded: the diary was being used for propaganda purposes to promote war against America. (George W.) Bush was equated to Hitler and the North Koreans felt persecuted like the Jews. However, although they sympathized with Anne Frank, the students who were interviewed did not approve of the victim character. She is weak,

[26] See Katherine Wilson, "Anne Frank Abroad," in *World Literature Today*, Vol. 87, No. 3 (May/June 2013), 28-33.

they told the journalists. We must not do what she did: we must fight, not hide ourselves.

This case of the diary's reception is really cause for thought, a great deal of it: for a variety of reasons. Here is the most sensational one. The diary, as a vehicle of the Shoah, allows a parallel story of oppression and victimization to be told: the roles of victims and perpetrators are reproduced with perfect symmetry. And yet the North Korean children reject the stance of the victim and everything associated with it, including the paradoxical heroism that normally acts as the catalyst for identification in the position of the victim. The North Korean children are indifferent to the mythological prestige that has gradually come to be heaped on this category. What they see in a victim is only passivity and resignation: aspects of somebody who is in the process of losing the fight for life. Courting paradox, it could even be said that in North Korea there is a process of reception underway that is more nuanced than processes of reception elsewhere that also employ the diary as a paradigm of victimhood and yet signal no difference with respect to the event.

But our inquiry into the diary's circulation cannot end here. There is something disturbing about this dislocation—most probably the bare fact that the text is being led into nomadism, into permanent exile. It is true that there is always a sense of disorientation associated with the dimension of the beyond[27] —and yet, in the era of World Literature, we know very well that this is the fate of all texts. The uneasiness that arises comes from the historical and emotional charge deposited in the pages of Anne Frank, which triggers an instinctive sense of protection when the diary is recodified elsewhere. We[28] seek to protect the text from readings that alter it—and we almost demand that it circulate with ethical interpretations stratified on its surface, giving unity or fixity to its inked signs.[29]And yet, whether we like it or not, Anne and

[27] See Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).
[28] Invoking a shared collective memory alone creates a problem. What are the expanses and limits of the community of memory that clings to *The Diary of Anne Frank*? It almost seems as if the text questions the vastness and cohesiveness of the community of memory that allows us to sympathize with one another at distance: studying the transnational journey of this work, then, might tell us something, maybe a lot, about the memorial density of human associations.
[29] I believe that the *Diary* is a special text that could very well take its place among the *hard cultural forms* theorized by Appadurai, which is to say, cultural manifestations that are difficult to separate and transform, and that are disturbing when they are exported and altered. See Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

her father were the first to prepare for the global reception of the diary. They were the first editors to neutralize the specific meaning of the Shoah, to transform it into an empty shell: a generic story of generic victims, generic perpetrators, generic young girls.

Chapter Six: Gender and the Holocaust

When examining gender and the Holocaust, there are many nuances to the subject. Here, we examine LGBTQ in the context of Paragraph 175, LGBTQ and resistance, transactional female leadership from a wife of a top-ranking Nazi official, female perpetrators, how gender was constructed in Nazi Germany, and much more. Starting with perhaps the most well-known woman of the Third Reich after Eva Braun is Magda Goebbels, and here, Adele-Marie asserts how Magda positioned herself to attain the title of "first lady of the Reich."

The First Lady of the Reich:
Magda Goebbels and Leadership in Nazi Germany

Wendy Adele-Marie

Johanna Maria Magdalena "Magda" Goebbels (1901-1945) held power and prestige as a wife, mother, and woman. She served as a leader for women in Nazi Germany (1933-1945) because of her beauty, fecundity, and close, intimate relationship with Adolf Hitler. Magda Goebbels was married twice; Meissner (1980) noted her first husband, Günther Quandt, the multi-millionaire founder of

dozens of companies, including BMW, with whom she had one child, a son, Harald, elevated her status socially in German circles. Richter (2018) said that marriage to Quandt gave her financial security. However, her second marriage to Joseph Goebbels, the *Reichsminister für Propaganda* [Reich Minister for Propaganda], helped establish her as a leader to German women. According to Adele-Marie (2010), with Joseph, Magda had six more children in rapid succession. However, the marriage strained continuously due to Joseph's constant cheating and belittling Magda, sometimes publicly, by criticizing how she looked or flirting with other women in her presence.

Adele-Marie (2010) further related that when the couple discussed divorce with Hitler personally, Hitler forbade it as the image of the Reich's first family collapsing would not go over well with the German people. As observed by Spielvogel (2010), Hitler implied that if Joseph Goebbels, a serial philander, went through with the divorce, demotion would be first, with other punishments to come; Joseph Goebbels backed down, and the couple stayed married.

Spielvogel (2010) also noted that Joseph Goebbels was keenly jealous of Magda's closeness to Hitler. Rupp (1977) perceived that Hitler admired Magda so much he unofficially gave her the task of opening some of his mail or even acting for him at public functions with a mostly female audience, posing for pictures together. For Magda, her marriage to Joseph Goebbels elevated her social status, "which in turn positioned them to maintain post-war romantic myths of the Third Reich as a new world order based on racial supremacy via domesticity and fertility" (Adele-Marie, 2020, p. 726). A fresh look at how Magda constructed her image and how she positioned herself alongside Hitler will demonstrate that she held an unofficial leadership role in the Third Reich.

Magda Goebbels

Williams (2018) stated that Magda was born in 1901 to Auguste Behrend, an unwed mother who married Oskar Ritschel. Williams noted that Magda's birth certificate for the father's name remained blank, even after the marriage to Oskar. Auguste and Oskar divorced, and after moving to Belgium, Auguste married a Jewish man, Richard Friedlander, who adopted Magda, gave her

his last name, and with whom Magda grew close. Meissner (1980) wrote of Magda's mother, Auguste, deciding to send Magda to a Catholic school but that Magda was interested in and observed more of Friedlander's Jewish customs than Catholic ones. After the war, Meissner revealed, Magda's parents divorced, and Auguste took her daughter back to Berlin. While there is no proof, *The Jewish Chronicle* (2016) suggested that Magda did not stay in touch with Friedlander once after the divorce.

Interestingly, *The Jewish Chronicle* related that historian Oliver Hilmes uncovered new research that Magda, who had a Jewish boyfriend, lied about her background, and denounced the Friedlander name, using Ritschel instead. *The Jewish Chronicle* (2016) argued that Hilmes proved that Friedlander was murdered in the concentration camp Buchenwald in 1939. Richter (2018) suggested that Magda's relationship with her first husband, the industrialist Günther Quandt, who was antisemitic, convinced Magda to change her name from Friedlander back to Ritschel and join the Nazi party, where she later met Joseph Goebbels. Quandt

and Magda divorced, and he was quite generous with the divorce settlement, leading to her financial independence.

Pseudo-Transformational Leader

After Magda's first divorce, since there was enough money to live comfortably, she entertained the idea of "going to university to become a lawyer or a designer" (Vitkine, 2017). Magda's mother, Auguste, said that "Magda was bored" but soon would find her cause, which ended up being Nazisim (Vitkine, 2017). In the summer of 1930, due to her ex-husband Quandt's encouragement, Magda attended a meeting of the Nazi party, was impressed, and joined. Still, it was when Magda, "who had previously not been interested in politics, first heard Joseph Goebbels speak," that she became obsessed with the idea of herself as an ultimate Aryan feminine archetype leader (Schaake and Bäurle, 2001, p. 180).

When Magda and Joseph first met, Schaake and Bäurle (2001) revealed that at first, she was not attracted to Joseph "on account of his small stature, as he was a contradiction to the ideal of the big blond Teuton" male (p.180). What probably enticed her

to start a relationship with the eccentric propagandist Joseph was not his intellect, even though he was well-spoken, with a Ph.D., the attraction was undoubtedly his direct connection to Hitler, whom she deeply admired. For Joseph, Magda was the epitome of Aryan beauty, and in turn, marriage to her because of her beauty, wealth, and elegance brought him a form of status. Marriage for the two, then, was mutually beneficial. Once she met Goebbels, Meissner (1980) promoted the idea that it was Hitler who pushed for the marriage between Magda and Goebbels. Hitler encouraged the wedding so that he could use his propaganda expert's wife as de-facto first lady, staying single as to promote himself as every woman's man: "Hitler saw himself as the father of the nation, and as a surrogate husband of sorts for the German women, their ultimate and omnipresent protector" (Adele-Marie, 2020, p. 728).

Consequently, for her if Magda could not become a lawyer, she could become a leader. By marrying Joseph Goebbels, one of the most powerful men in Nazi Germany, the *Reichsminister für Propaganda* [Reich Minister for Propaganda], "she successfully combined her public role as an important Aryan woman with

marriage and then motherhood" (Adele-Marie, 2020, p. 727). Once they married, the Goebbels became a power couple and enjoyed a close relationship with Hitler. At least at first with Joseph, and then with Hitler, for Magda, these relationships may have fulfilled all five of Maslow's hierarchy of Maslow's, especially esteem and self-actualization, which psychologist Margarete Mitscherlich alluded to in the documentary *Hitler's Women: Magda Goebbels* (Hartl, 2001). Many German women adopted Magda for Hitler a notion of a stand-in first lady of the Reich, including this author's paternal grandparents; their son was given the names of two top Nazi figures (Adele-Marie, 2010, p. 35).

Since Magda had many babies, she could publicly fill different forms of pseudo-transformational leadership: elegance, fertility, motherhood, and above all, undying commitment to Hitler as his companion, and who she lovingly encouraged her children to refer to Hitler as an uncle. In turn, Hitler was devoted to the children, as Meissner (1980) revealed, visiting them often, and posing for pictures, especially with the eldest daughter Helga (pp. 95-105). The Goebbels children posed for film and photos with

their parents and Hitler, which further enhanced their mother's pseudo-transformational leadership role as the ultimate fertile Aryan woman (Meissner, 1980, pp. 95-105).

Nazi Views on Fertility

The Nazis continually emphasized fertility, especially when World War One and the global flu pandemic decimated the German population. Joseph Goebbels (1934) gave a speech to a group of women in Berlin. Joseph said that countries with low birthrates declined and blamed modernity, stating that "a characteristic of the modern era is a rapidly declining birthrate in our big cities" (Goebbels, 1934, para. 11). In the same speech, he also (1934) acknowledged that some women had to work and that working women deserved recognition, but ultimately, as he said, for the German woman that

> her most glorious duty is to give children to her people and nation, children who can continue the line of generations and who guarantee the immortality of the nation. The woman is the teacher of the youth, and therefore the builder of the foundation of the future. If the family is the nation's

> source of strength, the woman is its core and center. The best place for the woman to serve her people is in her marriage, in the family, in motherhood. This is her highest mission. (para. 8)

Adele-Marie (2010) affirmed how the Nazis underscored this charge and related that the Nazi view on women was that they had "Hitler saw himself as the father of the nation, and as a surrogate husband of sorts for the German women, their ultimate and omnipresent protector. Women were to be wedded to the state by devoting their bodies for reproductive purposes of Nazi Germany" (p. 728). For some incredibly fertile women, they received the *Mutterkreuz*, the Cross of Honour of the German mother, a medal developed in honor of Hitler's mother that came in bronze, silver, or gold, much like an Olympic medal: "these medals came in three versions, bronze (four children), silver (six children) and gold (eight children)" with Magda – the recipient of the very first medal - received a silver medal for having seven children, Harald with her first husband Günther Quandt and six more with Joseph Goebbels (Adele-Marie, 2010, p. 5). Therefore, Magda Goebbels,

who was pregnant through most of her second marriage, was the perfect archetype of a fertile, feminine leader, ready to serve the state.

First Lady of the Reich

Magda's relationship with Hitler was deeply intimate and supposedly caused Joseph Goebbels some concern. However, Guenther (2004) related that Goebbels was a serial adulterer whose behavior embarrassed Magda and caused Hitler to admonish him. Magda "seemed like the perfect candidate for First Lady of the Reich. She was blonde, and had ice-cold blue eyes, which was practically the prerequisite for the Aryan ideal" (Guenther, 2004, p. 131). Furthermore, Guenther (2004) stated that Magda was "fiercely loyal to Hitler. Magda also shared Hitler's fervent antisemitism, conveniently forgetting her past Jewish connections. Williams (2018) noted that once she had joined the party, she worked to recruit more women and campaigned for the Nazis. More importantly, she embodied the party's leading tenet about women – motherhood.

Guenther (2004) also noted that Magda was simply a close friend of Hitler who loved to spend time with her and their children, who adored Hitler (pp. 131-133). As Williams (2018) alleged, Joseph Goebbels wanted his family to be the nation's "first family" and his wife as Hitler's non-sexual companion. As long as his self-serving interests were never subverted or threatened by other party members who jumped at the chance to promote their wives, Goebbels was only too happy to leave Magda with Hitler, knowing how much her presence pleased the *Führer*. However, even though Magda was intelligent, ambitious, elegant, and close to Hitler, Magda was ambitious, outspoken, wore makeup, smoked in public. She had also been the target of ongoing gossip that she was a "Jew-lover" who had a "torrid love affair" with a "fervent Zionist, Chaim Vitalty Arlosoroff" (Guenther, 2004, p. 132). Proven, even Magda would not have been safe.

A relationship with a Jew like Arlosoroff was unlawful: "We must always attempt to persuade each German-blooded woman who is considering a relationship with a foreigner that her behavior is improper, inconsistent with the racial expectations of

society. It must be clear that such behavior is a crime" (*Nachrichtendienst der Reichsfrauenführung Sonderdienst*, 1941, para. 17). Magda, who had a "love of fashionable and expensive clothes," always promoting herself as "best-dressed women in Germany that collided with images of home-spun, homemade dirndls" (Guenther, 2004, p. 133). Nonetheless, Magda had severe competition for the first lady's title. It was not a woman who, like the outlandish Emmy, wore tiaras to the opera and had ballgowns made from confiscated curtains from Polish castles (Guenther, 2004, p. 133). Consequently, one woman came close to supplanting Magda in the public's opinion as Germany's number-one mother, Gertrud Scholtz-Klink.

Gertrud Scholtz-Klink

Guenther (2004) advanced the idea that the Nazi party instead preferred Gertrud Scholtz-Klink as the Reich's first mother. Guenther (2004) said this was especially true of Scholtz-Klink, who liked to wear her hair in tight braids and traditional costume; thus, she "embodied female perfection as constructed by Nazi ideologies – a Nordic priestess preaching the cult of

womanhood." Scholtz-Klink, whose image was on hundreds of propaganda posters, was a widow who remarried a General, had several children, and not politically connected. She was, however, a fanatical Nazi who embraced everything the party stood for, including the image of a German woman as peasant-like; this perhaps led to Magda referring to Scholtz-Klink as a "cow" and "insolent and impertinent" (Guenther, 2004, p. 138). Adele-Marie (2020) said that

> Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, a widow and mother of four children, was the head of the Nazi Women's League (NS-*Frauenschaft*). The League recruited thousands of women to help construct a Nazi woman's proper imaging in the *Volksgemeinschaft* [national community]. This woman was subservient to men, understood her role in the private sphere, and emphasized profound fertility. (p. 738)

Despite many female candidates jockeying for a position at Hitler's side, he preferred to remain single with elegant ladies publicly accompanying him. If Hitler did not have a current love interest, he often asked the Goebbels to accompany him, whether

to a theater opening or a speech. Although Hitler had proclaimed other women as his first lady, such as Hermann Göring's second wife Emmy, she fell out of favor due to her ostentatious displays of wealth during wartime rationing (Guenther, 2004, p. 134). Therefore, it was Magda continually constructed as Hitler's acceptable first lady. Notably, Guenther (2004) illustrated that Hitler loved to be surrounded by elegant women, and the more, the better, and especially by a woman like Magda who never tired of him. She accompanied him everywhere to the opera or dinners, always paying rapt attention to his diatribes, referring to Hitler as godlike; in reverence, she said he was "not human, unreachable, untouchable," which was wholly unrealistic (Spielvogel, 2010, p. 124).

Outcomes

The significance of studying leadership roles in times of war contributes to scholarship that has largely ignored women's leadership roles in wartime in previous decades. Recently, scholars such as Daniel Patrick Brown, Irene Guenther, and Rochelle Saidel began to change that shift in scholarship to address the gap in

examining women's roles during the Third Reich. Hitler's inner circle, and those he enjoyed surrounding himself with, were mainly women. Rupp (1977) revealed Hitler's intimate associates were mostly women. Rupp (1977) asserted that this circle consisted of a female chef, secretaries, and women like Winifred Wagner, daughter-in-law of famed composer and Hitler's favorite cultural icon Richard Wagner, to Hannah Reitsch, a test pilot who was the only woman decorated by the *Luftwaffe* [German Airforce]. In vain, the latter tried to help Hitler escape from his Berlin bunker as the Soviets were closing in in April 1945. Other women played critical roles in Nazi Germany. Baroness Karin von Kantzow, Hermann Göring's first wife, Adele-Marie (2020), revealed played a role in helping Hitler secure a publishing deal for *Mein Kampf* [My Struggle].

Summary

Magda Goebbels served as a leader to millions of German women who wanted to emulate her beauty, style, and image. Her beauty, public professionalism, leadership abilities represented through public appearances constructed her as the Reich's ultimate

first lady. Adele-Marie (2010) noted that for Magda, this was a leadership position that even Hitler's long-suffering girlfriend, Eva Braun, whom he considered provincial and often mocked to her face, could not have held. Eva's primary achievement was staying loyal to Hitler even as he hid her away, never publicly acknowledging his relationship with her. Guenther (2004) observed that Hitler also allegedly mentally and emotionally abused Eva, making fun of her, which may have led to two suicide attempts. Hitler preferred to remain publicly single since "Hitler saw himself as the father of the nation, and as a surrogate husband of sorts for the German women, their ultimate and omnipresent protector" (Adele-Marie, 2020, pp. 727-728). Therefore, Hitler became every woman's man; whether she needed a father, husband, or patriarchal support figure, he would be that for German women.

With married women as his social companions to the female public, Adele-Marie (2020) argued, Hitler seemed available to all women, as he "relied on the devotion and support of women even though he banished them to the periphery of political life" (p.

731). Compared to the Nazi agrarian female typification, Magda was overly stylish. To Hitler, Magda was the ultimate companion who adored him but was ultimately unattainable and not a threat to the female public; this was due to her marriage to Joseph Goebbels, a factor which may have been why Hitler refused to allow the couple to divorce.

Although Magda had carefully crafted her image, Meissner (1980) stated that she was a depressed woman in constant pain due to neurological nerve disease. She was obsessively devoted to Hitler, married to a serial adulterer, and chose to kill herself and her six children with Goebbels at the end of the war rather than live in a world without Nazism. According to Vitkine (2017), Magda revealed that in her suicide note to her eldest son, Harald Quandt, how honored she was that on the day Hitler died, Hitler gave her his personal Nazi party pin. Magda related that Hitler had told her how proud he was that she had always stood by him. Magda also wrote to her eldest son that she was going to kill his six half-siblings:

> The world that comes after the *Führer* and national socialism is not any longer worth living in, and therefore, I took the children with me, for they are too good for the life that would follow, and a merciful God will understand me when I will give them the salvation." (Adele-Marie, 2020, p. 725)

Magda's suicide note suggested how she saw herself at the start of the regime as a transformational leader that would transform German women. Then, in the end, in her twisted logic, she set another example as a woman ready to sacrifice herself and her children for the one man who sacrificed himself for Germany.

For the brief thirteen years of the Third Reich, Magda served as an ultimate maternal pseudo-transformational leader for women. While Magda held no official title, Adele-Marie (2020) said that Magda's leadership role was one that she underscored in "an interview with the *Vossische Zeitung*, a German newspaper" (Adele-Marie, 2020, p. 733). Magda, referred to as the "First Lady of the Reich," strongly asserted that

> when the German woman is confronted with the choice between marriage and career, she will always be encouraged to choose marriage since that is undoubtedly best for a woman. I am attempting to make the German woman more beautiful. (Adele-Marie, 2020, p. 733)

Magda believed it was her moral duty to make German women the most elegant women globally, and her devotion to Hitler indicates, perhaps, a frustrated woman. Magda never became a lawyer or a designer, had two unhappy marriages, and was ultimately unable to hold political power herself. She could not have done so in a hypermasculine regime that excluded most women from political service, as even though women could become Nazi party members, "women were categorically denied any position of power within the party" (Adele-Marie, 2020, p. 25). Ultimately, as a beautiful maternal role model, Magda failed, as she was a monstrous murderer that directly participated in the murder of her six youngest children before she killed herself.

Therefore, this essay, which supported analysis, research, and affirmed specialized content knowledge, deconstructed

Magda's image. Outlining her role as a pseudo-transformational leader in the Third Reich offers critical intervention towards studies that privilege Nazi women's status, moral and political righteousness.

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The Construction of a Counter-World War II Memory

Wendy Adele-Marie

Special note: this paper was first presented at the ACLA conference in 2019 and served as the foundation for "Aryan Femininity: Identity in the Third Reich," in Aarons V., Lassner P. (eds). *The Palgrave Handbook of Holocaust Literature and Culture*. New York: Palgrave, 2020. Citations are left intact from the original work.

The cultural production of World War II memory and memorialization has focused primarily on the conflict between Allies and Axis powers, or the Nazi perpetrated Holocaust. Consistent with the neglected narratives of women in other polities who wielded power "behind the scenes," women involved in the Nazi party and their self-representations offer a more comprehensive history of women's critical influences. My analysis will consider how marriage to the primary architects of the Final Solution elevated the social status of most women, which in turn positioned them to maintain romantic myths of the Third Reich as a new world order based on racial supremacy.

Theoretically, this paper will offer critical intervention in studies that privilege women's moral and political righteousness and resistance to oppression. Three primary foci will emerge: contemporary identity in the "quest for Nazi female perfection" to stand as "the First Lady of the Reich; imaging of wives and their husbands post-war, and some filmic constructions of "Nazi women" from the past five decades.[30]

My study of Magda Goebbels, Lina Heydrich, and Veronika (Vera) Eichmann, wives of powerful Nazi officials, provides key examples of women's influential roles within Adolf Hitler's innermost circle as well as their influence on Nazi ideology and practice. Although Nazi ideology and policy pressured women to activate the new romantic domesticity that was sweeping Germany, a study of these women's self-representations

[30] Irene Guenther, *Nazi Chic: Fashioning Women in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), p. 138. Guenther further explained that "Clearly, grabbing a top spot in German society as the wife of a Nazi official did not always translate into a step-up in style or refinement. But then, the National Socialists were not always known for their sophisticated taste. In an effort to broaden the appeal of the Party symbol, the swastika surfaced as a decorative motif on virtually every consumer product available – on dog collars, bed sheets, matchbooks, and the water glasses of Nazi dignitaries. It even appeared as head ornament in the form of a woman's hat, on fruit drop candies, and embroidered onto sexy silk camisoles." Ibid., 136.

demonstrates that Nazi women were instrumental in designing and executing their state-constructed subservient role. My analysis will then argue that their influence extended to constructing a memory that shaped their husbands as innocent bystanders and their images as exemplary German patriots in the postwar period. Critical examination of these women's self-representations shows that Nazi wives knew much more about their husbands' roles than they would admit. Focusing on their disavowal of their own and their spouse's culpability reveals significant new insights into a different kind of resistance: against the exposure of Nazi atrocities and attempts to de-Nazify the nation.

A key example of how this resistance to de-Nazification prevailed decades later is a 1979 interview in which Lina Heydrich asserted that her husband Reinhard, *SS-Obergruppenführer, General der Polizei* as well as chief of the Reich Main Security Office, "had nothing to do with [the Final Solution]."[31] Lina was

[31] "Widow of Heydrich Says 'Holocaust' Ignores Facts" *The New York Times*. February 7, 1979, p. 2. Lina also wrote to many periodicals "correcting" them for what she alleged were falsehoods against Reinhard Heydrich's memory.

blonde, curvy, and maternal, and saw herself as an ideal representative of the Nazi government, (yet she sought little public attention until much after the war had ended and then only in the context of "righting the wrongs" against what she considered false attacks on her husband's memory), as it was believed that she was the one who had encouraged Heydrich to apply to the SS for employment.

After Heydrich rose in power, later Lina was not afraid to state her opinion about her contemporaries, and was said to have belittled even Margarete Himmler, the wife of *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler – her husband's superior officer - calling her "bourgeous, humourless, and stingy" with "facial twitches."[32] This demonstrates that women competed amongst themselves as to who looked the part of the ideal Aryan woman; status and marriage did not stop women from engaging critical commentary of one another. This criticisms of each other shows that women like Lina sought an informal agency of status within the regime as the ultimate model of Aryan femininity. After her husband's death in

[32] Guenther, p. 136.

1942, she continued to memorialize him until her death. In 1976, she wrote a book *Leben mit einem Kriegsverbrecher* (Life with a war criminal; later reissued as *My Life with Reinhard*). Because Heydrich died a general, after the war she successfully petitioned the West German government for a pension, which she received.[33] In 1979, Lina, at the time of the interview, was photographed with a brass funeral mask of her husband over her head. She was also filmed lovingly polishing it, denying the entire time that her first husband had any culpability for the Holocaust, instead, she argued, he was a wonderful husband who got caught up in Nazi politics.

Along with other Nazi wives, Lina Heydrich remained committed to the myth of Nazi triumphalism. Lina constructed herself as an innocent widow, a mother of four children, whose father was not in any way responsible for the crimes of the Third Reich.[34] This insistent denial offers an opportunity to combine

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[33] Note Robert Gerwarth's *Hitler's Hangman: The Life of Heydrich* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 2011, *passim*.

[34] The Heydrich's daughter, Silke, also sought a post-war memorialization of her father. In a December 28, 1971 interview, Silke, a model, argued that "was my father an evil man? If he really was, I should be able to feel this within myself. I have watched myself for a long time and didn't feel anything of the sort." See Joachim Moskau, "Nazi Children Reflect on Dad." *Boca Raton News*, December 28, 1971.

historical and rhetorical analysis of the construction of a counter World War II memory by women whose gender identities and roles advance research on the war and its aftermath. The great irony is that millions of women (it has been estimated that some thirteen million women were active in Nazi party groups from 1933-1945) supported to the end a regime that at heart had an abiding contempt for the female gender.

National Socialists sought to return women to subordinate positions in German society, which meant from the 1933 onset of power that women were to disregard any prior economic, political, or societal quest for emancipation. Women were to return to their domestic spheres, and, preferably, proudly have babies for the Fatherland (Hitler had emphasized this in a 1935 speech where he argued women could fight for her country via her fertility), with fertilization used as a racial weapon, a fertility armament overseen by women (although answerable to men, and, ultimately, Hitler himself).

Using women, National Socialism wanted to eliminate, “within a hundred years, the dark German type by mating them with

blonde women" in order to create a super race of 'racially' pure, blonde haired, blue eyed people.[35] To succeed in this goal, which the Nazis believed was necessary so that pure Germanic blood would survive, the regime established a hundred-year plan, conceived in part by Heinrich Himmler, Hitler's *Reichsführer, SS*. Himmler established "*Lebensborn* [Spring of Life], an SS maternity organization whose main function was to adopt racially suitable children for childless SS families and to assist racially sound unwed mothers and their children."[36] Children who matched racial Aryan tenets, with the hopes of creating the blonde super race, were stolen and given to SS families to raise; over 12,000 children were kidnapped and given to SS families.[37] *Lebensborn* was also described as "stud farms where SS men and suitable young women

[35] John Toland, *Adolf Hitler* (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1976), p. 764.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Andrew Malone. "Stolen by the Nazis: The tragic tale of 12,000 blue-eyed blond children taken by the SS to create an Aryan super-race." *The Daily Mail Online*. www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1111170/Stolen-Nazis-The-tragic-tale-12-000-blue-eyed-blond-children-taken-SS-create-Aryan-super-race.html (23 April 2010).

were mated to breed a master race." [38] A government that encouraged fertility in such a way, and used women to achieve racial goals certainly did not view women in an egalitarian fashion, nor were full civil and political rights for them promoted. Propaganda, literature and film helped support these constructs.

While many women were marginalized during the regime in order to assert Hitler's political ideology, they could find agency within their private spheres should they wish it or have the ability to do so, especially to memorialize their own sense of importance.[39] Moreover, the societal marginalization espoused by Nazism helped to authenticate the hyper-aggressive Nazi masculine ideal. If women returned to the domestic sphere, and if

[38] See Toland, p. 764 and refer to "Stolen by the Nazis" for more on what happened to the women who had babies with SS men, and for some reference on what happened to the children.

[39] See Claudia Koonz, "A Tributary and a Mainstream: Gender, Public Memory, and Historiography of Nazi Germany" in *Gendering Modern Germany History: Rewriting Historiography*, edited by Karen Hagemann and Jean H. Quataert (New York: Bergbahn Books, 2007), especially pp. 151-152, where Koonz states that it was true of oppression regimes where when private spheres are mandated as the norm for women, where it can then be seen how these actors "simultaneously allowed the women who operated within those spheres to exert agency, in fact, that is precisely how oppression functions. Ordinary women could be the victims of misogyny as well as beneficiaries (and sometimes facilitators) of racial persecution."

the enemy of the German man was destroyed, the Nazi ideal of masculinity would reign supreme; the enemy of the German man was defined as the Jew.[40] However, despite the masculine-oriented ideology of the Nazi party, during the 1930s and 1940s, many women in Germany proudly paid allegiance to the Third Reich. This was in spite of Nazi beliefs that mandated women do not interfere with the principles of the party. Although women could not join the elite sectors of the Nazi party, they could marry a Nazi official to gain authority.

Women such as Magda Goebbels, wife of propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, especially personified the ideal Aryan German wife and also the mother. She and Goebbels had six children, and a very troubled marriage. Perhaps in way to escape her misery, Magda constructed a role for herself as the leading lady of Nazi Germany. In an interview with the *Vossische Zeitung*, a German newspaper, Magda, referred to as the "First Lady of the Reich," strongly asserted that "when the German woman is

[40] Enemies that were non-Jews were defined as, but not limited to: Communists, the disabled, mentally ill, political dissenters, gypsies, and people belonging to various religious sects such as the Seventh Day Adventists.

confronted with the choice between marriage and career then she always will be encouraged to choose marriage since that is undoubtedly best for a woman. I am attempting to make the German woman more beautiful."[41] Images such as the ones Magda presented were memorialized in periodicals such as *Frauen Warte* and others.

Magda, who presented as the perfect German woman, with pale hair and blue eyes, personally attempted to make the Nazi ideal of the German (and later Austrian) woman appear more beautiful by publicly emulating an idealized domestic role for women in speeches and other propaganda. Following in her example and within the framework of this new role, women were to be the perfect wife and also, with the Nazi hyper-emphasis on fertility, have as many babies as possible to ensure the continuation of the German *Volk* (nation, people). An ultimate Nazi

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[41] Clifford Kirkpatrick, *Nazi Germany : Its Women and Family Life* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1938) pp. 117 and 319. Many women who were involved with the Nazi party did not commit crimes against humanity. Further, Clifford provided a contemporary overview of German women in the 1930s. See also Elizabeth Baer and Myrna Goldenberg. *Experience and Expression: Women, the Nazis, and the Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), p. 278.

construction of femininity based in fertility became a way for women to take part in the construction of the new state.[42] Indeed, at a very early age, girls were "encouraged to prepare for motherhood and given practice in tasks befitting the woman's role in the *Volksgemeinschaft*" a role that Magda Goebbels perfectly emulated.[43] However, this imaging was by Nazi standards faulty in many respects; Magda had a Jewish stepfather, drank, smoked, and was divorced. Furthermore, she possessed "steely determination and inordinate ambition, characteristics that Nazi male officials preened themselves on, but would have strongly

[42] Hundreds of warnings went out to women reminding them of their duty to the state as well as warning them of the consequences of marrying outside of the race, or, indeed, the country: "We must always attempt to persuade each German-blooded woman who is considering a relationship with a foreigner that her behavior is improper, inconsistent with the racial expectations of society. It must be clear that such behavior is a crime against the future of our people. Appropriate education will often prevent an undesirable marriage. As we have seen, current law does not prohibit the marriage of a German girl to a racially-unrelated foreigner. A marriage with a racially-related foreigner means the girl is lost to German ethnicity. In both cases, the marriage is more dangerous and less desirable that the marriage of a German man to a foreigner. Educating German women about this is urgently necessary. As a last resort, of course, there is the possibility of legal measures to combat racial threats to the German people. It is much better, however, to avoid letting it come to that, but rather lead each German girl to be aware of and proud of her German ethnicity." See: *Nachrichtendienst der Reichsfrauenführung Sonderdienst*, v. 10, # 16 (September 1941). https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/rff-sonderdienst.htm (11 January 2018).

[43] Donald D. Wall, Nazi *Germany and World War II*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003), 105.

discouraged the female sex from developing."[44] She also wore makeup, "while the general female public was being bombarded with placards and announcements that the German woman does not use makeup."[45] Magda later committed suicide after killing

[44] Guenther, p. 132.

[45] Ibid., p. 131. Also, *The National Socialist Women's Yearbook of 1934* "reveals women without makeup, without jewelry, and with large hips were considered the ideal Aryan woman in Nazi Germany. The Chairwoman of the Association for German Women's Culture, Agnes Gerlach claimed the ideal woman had become the "big Germanic type of woman" instead of the France's "small, romantic type." Gerlach's article stated it was un-German to use products to change hair color or to change one's looks with cosmetics. The image of the thin French woman was emotionally damaging to German women in Gerlach's opinion. Similarly, the Jewish influence was thought to include too much focus on accessorizing and overly made-up women. According to Nazi propaganda, Jewish and French woman were not strong or able to bear as many children because they were petite. The German woman was superior and did not need to use these enhancing products to be beautiful. Nazis associated gaudiness with Jewish women and easy women because of tradition. Dressing plainly without make up or jewelry had been popular since the earliest Europeans. There were even periods where Europeans believed wearing make-up was immoral. Anglo-Saxons may have never worn make up; there is no evidence of them wearing make-up. Eventually cosmetics, dying hair, and wearing gaudy jewelry became associated with easy women. Nazis often stated the Western cultures had created an ugly and unnatural beauty. Women in Germany were beautiful naturally and did not need to look like the Western and Jewish's flawed idea of beauty. Nazis promoted women who were larger and who could bear children easier because this is the role the woman played in the Nazi culture. Agnes article demonstrates the opinions of the Nazis. The ideal German woman did not need to blend in with other women of the world. They were supposed to be the superior race; therefore, their women did not need doctoring to be beautiful and perfect." See Agnes Gerlach, *The National Socialist Women's Yearbook of 1934* (Germany: National Socialist Women's Organization, 1934), 1, found at https://alphahistory.com/nazigermany/women-in-nazi-germany/ (15 December 2018).

her six youngest children. In death, she sought to establish a personal memory, as devoted Nazi who sacrificed herself and her children because of her immortal love for Hitler.[46]

Veronika (Vera) Eichmann has been largely absent from the larger historical filmic narratives (most recently in the Netflix 2018 *Operation Finale* film) concerning her husband, the architect of the Final Solution, Adolf Eichmann. If portrayed at all, she seen as a maternalistic, devoted, overly romantic mother, so devoted and benign that when her family was in hiding in Argentina, she allegedly did not even think to change her or her children's names when applying for passports: "[she] walked into the German Embassy in the Argentine capital and applied for passports for her two older sons. She wrote in the applications that the young men

[46] Her youngest son, Ricardo, said this about his mother: "My mother kept all the newspaper cuttings about him under the sofa. I would creep under there and peek at them. I understood bits and pieces but not the whole picture. When I asked my mother, she would say, 'Lass das' -- 'leave it.' It was a taboo subject and stayed that way till my mother died two years ago. ... And it would have been better if [my mother] had talked to me. I wanted to challenge her, but I saw her inner turmoil. I loved her, and she loved my father. What was I supposed to do?" See Palash Ghosh, "Legacy of the Third Reich: Eichmann's Remorseful Son." *International Business Times*. https://www.ibtimes.com/legacy-third-reich-eichmanns-remorseful-son-1048816 (5 December 2018).

"might want to travel to Germany during vacations to visit relatives." The woman's name was Vera Eichmann. She presented the sons' birth certificates and her marriage certificate. The passports were issued."[47] Later, when Eichmann was captured and sentenced to death, she moved back to Germany with two of her four sons, living on assistance from relatives as Nazi widows were not entitled to any monies from the government. She remains a semi-unknown figure, whose memorialization was forever linked with her husband. An image of Vera reading a book titled *Adolf Eichmann* whilst awaiting his execution does not lend for any sympathy. This incredulous image portrays her somewhat resolute and forced. Was she really someone who needed to read a book about her husband to understand one of the 20th century's most notorious mass murderers? Or was this a false attempt to construct a memory of herself as an unwitting spouse?

[47] *Spiegel*, "The Long Road to Eichmann's Arrest: A Nazi War Criminal's Life in Argentina." http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/the-long-road-to-eichmann-s-arrest-a-nazi-war-criminal-s-life-in-argentina-a-754486.html (15 December 2018).

Vera's youngest son Ricardo, born in 1955, said that his mother never explained what his father did: "Ricardo also said that after his father's capture and execution, that "the family returned to Germany shortly after the trial began, and Eichmann said his mother, Veronika, never told him what his father did or how his father died."[48] Thus, she removed accountability and attempted to escape familial culpability by creating an amnesiac, or absent memory.[49] Vera remains one of the Nazi wives whose biography is still not fully flushed out. Is she deserving of future scholarly examination to better understand, how, if at all, she imaged herself as the wife of one of the most powerful men in Nazi Germany? Perhaps, as it then provides an avenue to explore what exactly *she knew*. Unlike Magda Goebbels and Lina Heydrich, little suggests that Vera Eichmann attempted to establish herself as another "bride of Hitler" as a self-designated "first lady of the Reich."

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[48] J. Correspondent. "Eichmann's son: There is no way I can explain deeds." *The Jewish News of Northern California*. June 9, 1995. https://www.jweekly.com/1995/06/09/eichmann-s-son-there-is-no-way-i-can-explain-deeds/ (29 November 2018).

[49] I refer the reader to Steven Ramirez, et al, "Creating a False Memory in the Hippocampus." *Science*. July 26, 2013. http://science.sciencemag.org/content/341/6144/387.full (11 January 2019).

In general, images of women in Nazi Germany typified an unrealistic quest for women to achieve a look that reflected "a Nordic priestess preaching the cult of womanhood" which later lent to how German women were portrayed post-war in a hypersexualized fashion.[50] If women did not meet this standard, they were subjected to disparaging remarks or verbal bullying by their peers. Post-war, the quest for what the ultimate Aryan woman should be constructed continues in a disturbing content. Thus, linking the images of high-status Nazi women to the "everyday" woman in Nazi Germany shows us that during the Third Reich, women competed as to who best represented the "refashion of its female citizenry," and entered an unspoken contest of sorts to embody what the ideal German woman was thought to look like.

[50] Guenther, p. 131.

The Nazi Persecution of the LGBTQ communities

Wendy Adele-Marie

Persecution of all peoples not designated as Aryan and not fitting a specific legal and racial construct began before the Nazis came to power and escalated once Hitler was installed as Chancellor in January 1933. Gay men and others from the LGBTQ community were primarily targeted by the Nazis, with gay men the second highest targeted group of prisoners after the Jews. The Nazis viewed men as a more significant threat than women, arguing that women played a minor role in society. Further, in the Nazi view, even if a woman was a lesbian, as Gerdes (2015) revealed, the Nazis felt that the fertility of the lesbian community could be controlled by brutal force and sexual assaults, as mandated by the fierce belief in the Aryan reproductive construct.

As Gerdes (2015) suggests, in the Nazi framework of gender, the Nazis viewed men as more vital and necessary than women. Gay relations were already classified as a punishable offense; this was in Paragraph 175, which preceded the Nazis by several decades. Paragraph 175 “was the national German law that

prohibited sex between men. It was incorporated into the German penal code in 1871," and this law allowed for the brutal persecution and incarceration of gay men that went on even before the Nazis came to power and was not revoked until decades after the Nazis were gone (Kaczorowski, 2015).

However, even though Paragraph 175 was in place before the Nazis came to power and were invoked during the Weimar Republic (1919-1933), there were LGBTQ nightclubs and cabarets. Germany was also where the critical and influential Magnus Hirschfeld's "*Institut für Sexualwissenschaft* [the Institute for Sexual Science], which contained thousands of books and journals on sexuality and gender," resided (Astrup Jensen, 2021). The Nazis would burn the Institute down, denouncing Hirschfeld and all research conducted there.

Therefore, there was a legal precedent in Paragraph 175 that was in place against gay men, and because in a hyper-masculinized regime like Nazi Germany, where men held power, gay men represented a dual-threat against Nazi masculine identity:

they would not have sex with women and reproduce, which went against the Nazi heterosexual construct of the male agency.

Gay Men

Gay men were one of the primary targets of the Nazis. The LGBTQ community was overall considered asocial and immoral; anything related to gay identity, from clubs to organizations, was destroyed by the Nazis. Gay men did not fit the Nazi ideal of racial purity or the Hitlerian goal of perpetuating the future "master" race. Gay men were not viewed as beneficial for reproductive purposes, as were lesbians, and were, therefore, a threat to the Nazi view of manhood. However, one man blurred the lines of sexuality and represented the Nazi construct of masculinity.

That man was Ernst Röhm, a World War One veteran, a friend of Hitler, and a leader of the *Sturmabteilung* (SA) [Stormtroopers, Brown Shirts], was gay and presented himself as a man who "attached paramount importance to the values of militarized masculinity" (Wills, 2019, para. 4). The Nazi construct of masculinity was the weapon against "the threatening "wave" of the bourgeoisie, women, Jews, socialists, Bolsheviks, all of whom

represented weakness, chaos, and disorder" (Wills, 2019, para. 4). Röhm presented himself as the Nazi hypermasculinized ideal, and with his relationship with Hitler seemingly assured, he felt confident as the chief of staff of the *Sturmabteilung* (SA, the Brownshirts), even to the point where he opposed Paragraph 175.

> Röhm was Hitler's right-hand man as head of the *Sturmabteilung* (SA, the Brownshirts), the Nazi paramilitary wing. Instrumental in the rise of the party via the street-fighting and extra-judicial murders of the late 1920s and early 1930s, Röhm's sexual orientation was no secret after the mid-1920s. Hitler either ignored it or said it was immaterial, depending on who he was talking to, including other Nazis. (Wills, 2019)

Hitler already knew that Röhm was gay. So why act against him? Röhm was seen as a threat to Hitler's authority.

There was an alleged conspiracy that Röhm had a desire to merge the SA with the army; another threat came from Röhm himself, who was supposed to have said that the SA was the only legitimate body to fight the communists. Hitler moved against

Röhm because he was a political threat; any threat against Hitler had to be dealt with immediately. Röhm, who did not approve of some of Hitler's policies, began to criticize other top Nazis and spread rumours openly.

Simkin (2016) stated that Röhm alleged that Joseph Goebbels, the *Reichsminister für Propaganda* [Reich Minister for Propaganda] was interested in his wife Magda Goebbels's son from her first marriage in a sexual way. Goebbels hated Röhm and advised Hitler that Röhm had to go. Hermann Göring, *Reichsmarshall des Großdeutschen Reiches* [Marshal of the Empire] and the second most powerful Nazi after Hitler, and Heinrich Himmler, the *Reichsführer of the Schutzstaffel* [Protection Squadron, SS], were united against Röhm. Both were concerned that the SA, who, Simkin (2016) noted, had a membership of over four million men, whose allegiance was with Röhm.

As Simkin (2016) pointed out, Göring and others made a list of those in the regime, all of whom had to be eliminated. Göring especially denounced Röhm and hated gay men; thus, Röhm was at the top of the list. Evidence against Röhm grew,

especially when Röhm said that “Adolf is a swine... He only associates with the reactionaries now. His old friends aren’t good enough for him. Getting matey with the East Prussian generals. They’re his cronies now. Are we revolutionaries, or aren’t we?” (Simkin, 2016, para. 56). Therefore, for Hitler’s political gains, Röhm had to go, and the only way to deal with this famous figure was to discredit gay men and denounce Röhm’s sexuality as immoral, asocial and place gay men on the list of threats against the Nazi world order.

In 1934, the president of Germany, Paul von Hindenburg, was ill, and Hitler was convinced it was important that he be seen as von Hindenburg’s rightful and only heir. Thus, when it was evident in the summer of 1934 that von Hindenburg had weeks to live, Hitler and his intimates decided it was necessary to consolidate power and secure Hitler’s position.

The plan was to now use Röhm’s sexuality against him in what Hitler referred to as a morality campaign against gay men. Evans (2005) revealed that on trumped-up charges of corruption, Röhm was arrested in the early hours of 30 June 1934, with Hitler

present at his arrest: “Hitler entered Röhm's bedroom alone with a whip in his hand. Behind him were two detectives with pistols at the ready. He spat out the words; Röhm, you are under arrest” (Simkin, 2016, para. 97). Although Hitler did not want Röhm to die, he was convinced there was no other way Röhm could be allowed to live. Röhm was murdered in his jail cell on 1 July 1934. His close friends and their partners were then murdered under Hitler’s direct orders.

As Evans (2005) noted, Hitler continued to publicly weaponize Röhm’s sexual orientation as a reason to remove him from power. Evans (2005) elaborated that Hitler denounced what he referred to as anyone considered asocial, and attacks against gay men increased.

As the USHMM has recorded, “Between 1933 and 1945, an estimated 100,000 men were arrested for violating Nazi Germany’s laws” that were against gay men, “and of these, approximately 50,000 were sentenced to prison.” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2019b). On the 28th of June 1935,

the Nazis amended Paragraph 175 to allow for broader persecution of gay men.

The Nazi Amendment to Paragraph 175 is as follows:

> The German Ministry of Justice revises Paragraphs 175 and 175a of the German criminal code with the intent of 1) expanding the range of criminal offenses to encompass any contact between men, either physical or in form of word or gesture, that could be construed as sexual; and 2) strengthening penalties for all violations of the revised law. The revision facilitates the systematic persecution of gay men and provides police with broader means for prosecuting them. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2019b)

Within the camp system, after 1937, prisoners were identified by a badge or symbol. Gay men were marked with a pink triangle, as

seen here in this 1938 image:

The men in the image were imprisoned in Sachsenhausen and were wearing the pink triangle badge. The image is in the public domain and made possible through the National Archives and Records Administration.

Throughout the Holocaust, gay men were subject to brutal mistreatment, torture, abuse, and medical experimentations. Few survived; the death rate of gay men in the Holocaust has been "estimated to be as high as 60 percent--among the highest of non-Jewish prisoners. By 1945, with the end of World War II and the dissolution of the Nazi government, only about 4,000 gay prisoners in the camps had survived" (Kaczorowski, 2015). As Kaczorowski (2015) proved, reparations for gay men were not acknowledged after the war, and only in the late twentieth century did

conversations begin to recognize gay men as victims of the Nazis formally. Kaczorowski (2015) noted that "In May 2002, the German parliament completed legislation to pardon all gays convicted under Paragraph 175 during the Nazi era." The Nazis also targeted lesbians. Although their gender as viewed through a Nazi lens lent a difference to how the Nazis perceived their sexuality.

Lesbians

Lesbians were also the targets of the Nazis, but as Gerdes (2015) discovered, "when the Nazis considered expanding Paragraph 175 in 1935, to include same-sex acts between women, the discussions were halted on the basis that women played a relatively minor role in public life" (Gerdes, 2015). Therefore, there are gender implications here that include biological orientation. Because the Nazis viewed women as inferior to men, and since the "*Reichsminister* of Justice also concluded lesbian acts could not be clearly determined given women's generally more intimate public contact"(Gerdes, 2015). The Nazis viewed women as fertility vessels and believed all women could be used

for reproductive purposes. Gerdes (2015) argued that this marginalization saved lesbians since the Nazis saw their sexuality as curable, intending to preserve women for reproductive purposes.

Scholars have further suggested that the "image of the German mother and wife is what likely saved the majority of German lesbians from being arrested and detained in one of the concentration camps: their sexuality was seen as 'fixable' by the Nazis" (Gerdes, 2015). However, due to mistreatment within the camp structure, as Gerdes (2015) elaborated, lesbians had a short lifespan and were subjected to barbaric sexual abuse and torture. Nevertheless, why were lesbians not as much of a threat as gay men were?

What can be ascertained about the differences comes directly from the *Reichminister*'s view, where he made a case for the Nazi viewpoint that "women's marginal role in public offices would not allow them to falsify or bastardize public life like gay men" (Gerdes, 2015). Lesbianism was not criminalized, and instead of pink triangles, lesbians wore a "green badge, denouncing them as *Berufsverbrecher* [established or 'career'

criminals] or the black triangle, the ‘asocial’ badge, also worn by Romani and homeless people” (Gerdes, 2015). Lesbians were also forced into brothels, where they were subjected to horrific acts of gendercide. More research is needed into this area of Holocaust studies, where for decades, women’s experiences were often excluded from general scholarships. Historians such as Rochelle Saidel and Danny M. Cohen have worked tirelessly on narratives from marginalized survivors and victims of the Nazis.

Concerning the LGBTQ experience during the Holocaust, scholarship is not as inclusive as it must be. Much more research and scholarship are needed. For LGBTQ survivors, many hid their trauma; as government-sanctioned persecution went on, hate crimes rose and today are still on the increase. Therefore, we can conclude that as Astrup Jensen (2021) stated, “due to limited research funding, the high death rate of gay men in the camps that these victims are often forgotten by the world.” Further, as Astrup Jensen (2021) noted, with more inclusive scholarship, opening up the stories of other non-Jewish victims of the Nazis will help

expand our understanding of how the Nazis targeted the LGBTQ community.

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William Arondeus and his legacy of courage

Adam Yunis

During the Nazi occupation of Western Europe, resistance movements in every country fought a clandestine war against the occupiers. The nature of this war meant that individuals who actively resisted faced constant threats of death or torture by the Nazis if they were captured. This essay will highlight the role two gay men played in these movements and discuss the motivating factors for gay men who put themselves in danger to oppose the Nazis. As Adele-Marie pointed out, further study is needed on the role of LGBTQ individuals who were persecuted and those who actively resisted the Nazis. The legacy of courage left by these men is crucial to remember when discussing different forms of resistance.

Nazi Germany was a mix of reactionary and revolutionary politics, which means its revolutionary policies sought to transform society, but often these policies were reactions to liberal or left-wing beliefs. The Weimar government of the 1920s was one of the most liberal social regimes of the time; this included gay rights and

the study of sexuality. The Nazi persecution of gay men was a part of their "social cleansing" policies to eliminate gay men/ Jewish/ Communist/ influence in society that they believed was represented by the Weimar regime. By the 1930s, the very public actions of the Nazis in their book burnings, racial policies, persecution of Jews, and hatred for modern art made it clear to gay men and artistic communities that the Nazis were a threat.

The social policies of Nazi Germany in occupied Western Europe included cultural censorship and a return to "Classical Art." The artistic communities of the major European cities were thriving during the 20s and 30s, and the Nazi invasion of Western Europe brought this to an end. In the Netherlands, the Nazi occupation cultural committee was imposed by the *Kulturkammer*, which issued edicts on who could work in the arts and what could be produced. It is in this context that the story of William Arondeus' resistance begins.

William Arondeus was born in 1894 to a large family, the youngest son of an Amsterdam fuel trader. At the age of 17, declaring his intention to become an artist and the fact that he was

a gay man, he fought with his parents and left home, beginning a career as a painter and later a writer. He authored and illustrated several short stories and books but led a modest life among the Amsterdam artistic circle. After the Nazi invasion, Arondeus believed it was his duty to resist and encouraged others to help in any way they can. In the spring of 1942, he founded *Brandarisbrief*, an illegal periodical in which he expressed his opposition to the occupying forces, their anti-Jewish actions, and the *Kulturkammer*.

Dutch artists Gerrit van der Veen and composer, Jan van Gilse had been publishing a similar underground resistance paper, the *De Vrije Kunsteenaar* [The Free Artist], and in 1943, the two papers merged, and Arondeus became friends with van der Veen and his small band of resistance members in Amsterdam. Van der Veen was a specialist in forging documents for Jews and began the activity shortly after refusing to declare himself an Aryan during the first months of Nazi rule. After the merger, Arondeus began forging documents and using his artistic skills to produce quality forgeries rapidly. Frieda Belinfante, a Dutch cellist, conductor, and

lesbian, was also a member of this resistance group and forged documents alongside Arondeus. They became great friends.

There was one major problem with producing forged documents in Amsterdam during this time, the Municipal Office for Population Registration in the city centers meant that a resident's data could be checked, so forged cards could be easily detected. Precise record-keeping by the Dutch was one of many reasons that 102,000 of the 140,000 Dutch Jews were murdered in the Holocaust. The existence of this bureau posed an obstacle to rescuing Jews. Arondeus and van der Veen saw only one solution. Guards were consistently placed at strategic points all around the Amsterdam office, as a similar attack had occurred late in 1942. Knowing they would be on high alert for an attack, the resistance group would use this to their advantage. On March 27, 1943, Willem, dressed in an officer's uniform made from scratch alongside his lieutenant (van der Veen), four "policeman" and three more "officers" greeted the guards, stating they were there to search for bombs. Arondeus had pulled off his most significant artistic performance. The guards believed the story, and the group

walked in with several pounds of explosives, ready to destroy the building. Two medical students among the group sedated the guards with phenobarbital and dragged them from the building. The attack went as planned, with fire and explosives destroying much of the building; 800,000 identify cards were destroyed, and 600 blank cards and 50,000 guilders were removed from the building.

The group who carried out the attack all got away initially, but the head of police in the German occupation administration was infuriated and offered vast sums of money for information on the group. In early April, Willem was captured, and later 13 other members of the group were arrested. Willem was found guilty and sentenced to death on June 18, 1943.

Lau Mazirel, a lawyer, and Dutch resistance member who would later become one of the first activist attorneys for LGBTQ rights, visited Willem in prison shortly before his execution. He asked her to “tell the world that gays are no less courageous than anyone else” (Legacy Chicago, 2021).

Arondeus was murdered on July 1, 1943, along with 12 other members of the resistance captured after the attack. In 1986, Yad Vashem honored Willem and the planners and participants of the attack as Righteous Among the Nations.

Frieda Belinfante survived the war, moved to the U.S., and was the founding artistic director and conductor of the Orange County Philharmonic.

Lau Marizel would become a lawyer for the COC Nederland, founded in 1946, the oldest LGBT rights group in the world, still operating today.

Willem Arondeus's courage and character were something he had his whole life, but his words can give us some insight into why some gay men sought out dangerous positions during the war. For gay men growing up in the early 20th century, they were constantly reminded that being gay was associated with a lack of courage and forced to think that there was something medically wrong with them. Resistance movements in Western Europe provided opportunities for gay men to fight back against the Nazis in any way they could, as distinctions such as someone's sexuality

was not a concern to these groups. Another example of this sentiment can be found in Denis Rake, whose interviews are luckily preserved in Marcel Ophuls' masterpiece on the occupation of France, *The Sorrow and the Pity.*

Denis Rake was a British agent whose war records are filled with talks of his bravery, character, and sense of duty. He operated for most of the war in the underground with the resistance movements in France. Born in 1901 in England, Rake was older than most men serving in the SOE-the special operations executive. Rake led an exciting life before the war, starring in musicals and touring Europe. He stated that he wanted to be in the underground due to his anxiety about being gay. Rake also said that he wanted to prove to himself that he was as courageous as others. As Marcel Ophuls points out in the interview, he was affected by the prejudice of others that he had internalized, constantly volunteering for dangerous missions. His theater background, mastery of French, and his determination to act with courage made him an outstanding agent.

During the war, thousands of gay men fought to defeat the Nazis, and we will never know the precise number. Studying the backgrounds of resistance members and rescuers during the Holocaust is an essential task for future scholars. You will find that many resistance fighters and rescuers during the Holocaust often had a history of helping social causes or came from groups that faced persecution themselves. A valuable lesson, and I encourage the next generation of scholars to be active in scholarship and their communities, as you never know when a moment of steadfast resistance to injustice will present itself.

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Irma Grese: "The Beautiful Beast"

Michael Vyborny

> *„No one who did not see her during her cruel acts, could not believe that such a beautiful creature is capable of torturing others with such a sadism and hate."* - Erich Schön, 1945

Irma Grese is one of the most well known and most despised female guards who worked in the Nazi concentration camps during World War II. She had served in three notorious camps: Ravensbrück, Auschwitz-Birkenau, and Bergen-Belsen and she held the distinction of being one of the youngest women to work on behalf of the SS. Because of her startling beauty, her youth, and enraged cruelty against concentration camp victims, Irma Grese became the center of attention at her postwar trial. There had been so much publicity about her in newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals around the world that she became better known than many of Hitler's notorious henchmen.

Many simply could not believe that such a pretty, young blonde girl with an innocent face could be capable of committing

the crimes that she had been indicted for by the British. Grese is remembered by many survivors as to just how calloused and brutal a human being could be. Even after many years, the memory of Grese would still conjure up horrendous flashbacks of her sadistic acts against defenseless people. Sadly, there is no way one can count just how many deaths she was responsible for, but it had to have been thousands, especially during the May 1944 mass selections of the Hungarians Jews who flooded into Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The childhood and early life of Irma Grese is well documented in several published accounts; as a result, my study will only examine the basic facts of her childhood years and place more emphasis on her time in the camps.

Irma Grese was born on October 7, 1923, in a small German village of Wrechen, approximately forty kilometers from Neustrelitz. Her parents were worked as managers of an estate and Irma was one of five children—she had two brothers and two sisters. Irma Grese's mother committed suicide by ingesting a cleaning agent that contained hydrogen chloride in January 1936.

Grese was only twelve at that time and it must have had an effect on her because she discovered her mother as she began to die from this horrific method of killing herself (Brown, 2004, p. 11, 13-14).

The people from Wrechen never spoke about her much after the war because the small village is mainly known for the birthplace of the most notorious female guard and the residents were, of course, not proud of it. Also, Wrechen was located in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), or "East Germany," and one had to shed any connection to Nazism for self-preservation.

As many young German children, Irma Grese was fascinated with Nazi ideology, its symbolism, and exuberance. With her sister, she joined the organization *Bund Deutscher Mädel* ("League of German Girls"), which was the female version of the male *Hitlerjugend* ("Hitler Youth") Nazi organization. Their father did not want them to join the group, but the two sisters joined it even with their father´s opposition.

Irma Grese attended primary school for eight years and, in 1938, at the age of fourteen, she left school. Some sources say that

she was bullied and did not see a reason for going to school anymore. (Prima ZOOM, 2020). She worked at the Fürstenberg dairy factory and then as a sales assistant in a small shop in nearby Lychen, Germany. From 1939 until 1941, she served as an assistant nurse at the SS sanatorium in Hohenlychen. She worked under the head of the hospital, Karl Gebhardt, who later performed horrific experiments on women in the female concentration camp, Ravensbrück. Grese tried to become a nurse, but it did not work out. Failing at that, she applied for the women´s SS service and volunteered to train for a position as an *Aufseherin* ("supervisor") in Ravensbrück (Brown, 2004, p. 17, 19, 23-27 and *Gedenkstätte*, 2004).

Ravensbrück 1942-1943

Irma Grese's application was accepted by the Nazi authorities and she enrolled in the female guards' training program at Ravensbrück in July 1942. She completed the course and became *Aufseherin.* Because she was one of the youngest female guards, her pay salary was 54 *Reichsmarks* a month, which was

much less than the salary of her colleagues received. (Brown, 2004, p. 38 and 40-41).

Apart from being the biggest concentration camp for women, Ravensbrück was also a training center for the new female guards. Between 1939 and 1945 more than 1,000 male SS guards and over 3 000 female guards served in the camp and its subcamps. The first commandant was *SS Hauptsturmführer* Max Koegel. He was succeeded in the summer of 1942 by *SS Hauptsturmführer* Fritz Suhren. The replacement of the commandant was the time when Grese began serving in Ravensbrück (Beßmann & Eschebach, 2013, p. 167, 173-174). In July 1942, the chief guard (*Oberaufseherin*) was Maria Mandl.

Because the chief female guard was also responsible for the training program of the new female guards, it is possible that Mandl herself was in charge of Grese´s training. Grese with other *Aufseherinnen* learned their regulations and were taught how to oversee the prisoners as well as how to punish and beat them. It was then when Grese was instructed in the finer points of cruelty and callousness toward her prisoners. Indeed, it was well known

that these young women changed dramatically after completing their training program (Hájková, 1963, p. 32, 288).

Grese finished her training after about three weeks and then was assigned to oversee several work details. She oversaw prisoners the laundry detail as well as the Opitz Nursery and Gardening operation. During her leave, Irma Grese returned to visit her family in Wrechen for the last time. She came home wearing her uniform to impress her family with her position in the female guard unit. It was during this visit that a fight between her and her father ensued and Grese never returned home again (Brown, 2004, p. 37-40).

Auschwitz-Birkenau 1943-1945

In March 1943, Irma Grese was deployed to Auschwitz-Birkenau. At first, she worked as a telephone operator in the office of a *Blockführer* (Brown, 2004, p. 43). After that she supervised several female details for about a year. As former prisoner Erich Kulka noted in his account, “She was in Birkenau for a long time and had lots of different duties.” (Kraus & Kulka, 1964, p. 242).

In addition, Grese supervised a women's detail that built roads., Then, for some infraction of camp regulations, she was assigned to monitor a punishment detail where prisoners worked in the worst conditions and where the death rate was the greatest in the whole camp. Following this, Grese was given a gardening detail in Rajsko, one of the subcamps of Birkenau (Cywiński et al., 2017, p.77). She also oversaw a detail that picked herbs for the camp hospital. This particular detail was set up with the agreement of SS Dr. Werner Rhode. After nearly three months of operation, this particular detail was cancelled (*Zeszyty Oświecimskie* 24, 2006, p. 65).

Irma Grese developed a reputation for excessive cruelty while overseeing all of these different work details. She would often release her dog on the defenseless prisoners under her command, especially on those details that took place outside the camp complex (Brown, 2004, p. 52). Her cruelty was soon known throughout Auschwitz-Birkenau. During 1943, Grese served as the block, or barracks, leader (*Blockführerin)* of various barracks of the women´s camp in Birkenau. For a time, she oversaw the

packages section where female prisoners sorted parcels that had been sent by the prisoners' friends and relatives. Grese helped herself to some of the packages and also delighted in making inmates wait for their packages during rollcalls in frigid weather. In December 1943, she worked in the postal department where she censored the prisoner´s letters (Posmysz & Wójcik, 2017, p. 395; Brown, 2004, p. 44; and Cywiński et al., 2017, p. 77).

Promotion in 1944

The most important time for Grese came in May 1944 when Auschwitz-Birkenau was awaiting mass transports from Hungary. At this time, she became directly involved with the selections of the Hungarian Jews, which was the biggest killing action in the history of Auschwitz. She was promoted to be the *Lagerführerin* (camp leader) of the new camp, BIIc, also known as *C Lager* (Camp C), which contained approximately 30,000 Hungarian female Jews. However, it must be pointed out that Grese had not become the chief guard of the whole Women´s Birkenau camp, but only of the "C" component. By the summer of 1944, BIIc had been reduced to roughly 20,000 young women

mainly from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland (Expressen, 1945 and Smoleń, 1972, p. 106).

Due to the Soviet advance, the prisoners were awaiting transports to other camps in the West. By this time, there was a shortage of the already meager rations and the hygienic conditions had deteriorated (Smoleń, 1972, p. 105-106). Grese was bears some of the responsibility for the inhuman conditions in her area of the camp and the poor inmates under her charge had to bear the consequences of her calloused behavior. Due to her elevated position within the women's camp, Irma Grese would become known as one of the most ruthless and brutal of all the camp guards.

Most of the prisoners got to know firsthand about Irma Grese's cruelty during the daily and dreaded roll calls. She would usually arrive at the roll calls by bicycle, and she would gleefully whistle while the nearly 20,000-30,000 inmates had already been standing a couple of hours on their feet, in formation, in front of their blocks, waiting for her arrival, regardless of what it was like outside (Expressen, 1945). The prisoners who saw her for the very

first time could not believe that such a beautiful blonde woman with an angelic face could be cruel. They had no idea what they were about to experience.

As other SS guards arrived at the roll call to commence the prisoner count, Grese stood out: she would generally wear well-tailored greenish grey culottes, usually with a white blouse or a light blue shirt, her blonde hair pulled up into a bun, her SS hat curtly placed atop her hair, and she had on black high boots that were highly polished (Hegedüs, 2014, p. 50-51; Expressen, 1945; and Lengyelová, 2018, p. 263). She also carried a silver pistol in her holster (Moskovits, 1993, p. 172). During the count, Grese would whip individual prisoners for the smallest movement with her infamous whip that was fashioned from brown-red leather. Grese always carried her whip inside one of her boots (Schön & Kraus, 1945, p. 87 and Lengyelová, 2018, p. 263). Grese hit the prisoners with such powerful blows that they would fall to the ground instantaneously. One survivor from Slovakia described how Grese once broke an arm of a woman who did not want to kneel as a punishment for religious reasons (USC Shoah

Foundation's Visual History Archive, Interview with Livia Vogelmann). She was also capable of kicking or beating inmates to death if they fell out due to weakness or if they were not able to stand up straight. Often her beatings were simply wanton acts of brutality for which the victim was simply close enough for Grese to attack. Finally, Grese never hit the inmates without her hands in gloves (Expressen, 1945).

Grese would very often make the whole camp stand for hours at a time. Sometimes she ordered the prisoners to stand in place completely naked. The prisoners were not allowed to leave the formation until she gave the order to disperse (Expressen, 1945). Because of these conditions, some prisoners fainted then Grese trampled on them and/or set her big German shepherd on them (Erlichman, 2000, p. 36). She was known for punishing individual prisoners, blocks or even the whole camp with long hours of kneeling and sometimes the prisoners were forced to hold bricks above their heads (Cywiński et al., 2017, p. 77 and Expressen, 1945).

Selections

During the roll calls, Grese and some other guards selected individual prisoners for direct transport to the gas chambers. Many prisoners mentioned that they witnessed Irma Grese and Dr. Josef Mengele conducting these selections the more than others. Her mere presence struck feared in the prisoners and a few even became hysterical when they saw her approaching. Again, due to her striking physical features, immaculate dress, flawless complexion, and relentless brutality, her image was etched in the memory of those who survived.

There were terrible scenes that occurred during the macabre selection process. Grese would often join a few of the other SS guards and Dr. Mengele. She would then conduct a "parade," a procedure in which prisoners would pass in front of her. She picked whoever she found desired. Once she picked the most emaciated women, but the next time, she would those who had skin rash (Expressen, 1945). She shot at prisoners who tried to escape their selection to be transported to the gas chambers (Brown, 2004, p. 80). She would even whip the prisoners chosen. During the selections she would not show any mercy and calmly

send thousands of women to their deaths (Lengyelová, 2018, p. 170, 264). She purposefully tore relatives apart who attempted to go together on a work detail (Brown, 2004, p. 53)

Acts of Kindness

Although Grese was known for her brutal acts, it must be noted that there were occasions in which she behaved much differently; indeed, she even acted with kindness. During some selections, she would save some of the prisoners. For example, this happened when she saved a woman on sixteen separate occasions from a selection overseen by Dr. Mengele (Camurati, 2017). Grese was able also to help in some way the prisoners who worked for her and she arranged their meeting with their relatives in the camp (Schnurmacher. 2019, p. 152). She picked the prisoners whom she wanted for personal assistance. An excellent seamstress from Munkács, Hungary, personally sewed uniforms for her while a different seamstress from Budapest attended to other clothing Grese wanted to add to her wardrobe (Hegedüs, 2014, p. 51 and Lengyelová, 2018, p. 263, 269).

When Grese was on duty at Bergen-Belsen, she once caught young girls picking up potatoes which they found and let them go without any punishment or beating (Verolme, 2016, p. 217-218). She took a liking to some prisoners too. This happened to a Polish prisoner named Nina Kaleska. Grese made her work for her and she gave her extra rations from her private food supply (Miller, 2000, p. 36).

Finally, Irma Grese had a friendly relationship with *Lagerälteste* (Head prisoner of compound BIIc), Magda (nee Hellinger) Blau. However, as Mrs. Blau later said, “She could talk to me like a friend; and the next minute she was a devil” (Miller, 2000, p. 139).

The Daily Hunt for Victims

Apart from roll calls and selections, Irma Grese had authority over the administration of her camp. She seemed to be ubiquitous. She seemingly could appear anywhere, at any time, and she took great satisfaction when she saw prisoners were quickly evading her. She spied on the starving prisoners who were trying to get some food by the camp kitchen and then she would take delight

in brutally punishing them on the spot or she would shoot them outright (Perl & Preston 2017, p. 140 and Schnurmacher, 2019, p. 152). She was active in the camp during curfew lockdown when prisoners were supposed to be in their blocks. If she located someone not in her designated place, Grese would give the offender a thrashing (Expressen, 1945).

Survivor of Lager C, Isabella Leitner wrote: “You´d rather go to the crematorium than get into her hands” (Leitner& Leitner, 1994, p. 228). However, Grese was not alone in her enjoyment of inflicting pain on violators. Other female wardens in the Auschwitz-Birkenau retinue took part in these daily acts of Schadenfreude, making the prisoners’ lives miserable. These notorious female overseers included the *Rapportführerin* Margot Drechsel, Luise Brunner and Elisabeth Hasse (Hegedüs, 2014, p. 50).

The Most Beautiful Women Prisoners

Grese was known for her perverse inclinations (Schön & Kraus, 1945, p. 87). She specifically picked out and sexually abused attractive and/or well-endowed young Jewish girls. Grese

was relentless in hunting down those who did not want to have anything with her or were seen purposefully evading her (Kraus & Kulka, 1964, p. 126). She would usually dispatch the female prisoners she had raped to the crematorium. (Lengyelová, 2018, p. 314). On one occasion, Irma Grese made another prisoner stand as a guard in front of a barracks where she was raping other Jewish girls (Miller, 2000, p. 36). She focused on the pretty women in other ways than sexually. At times, she would walk around the camp and beat them on their breasts with her whip (Langbein, 2004, p. 400). She would take pretty girls, throw them on the ground, beat them until they were bleeding and then send them to the crematorium (USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive, Interview with Relly Geller).

Grese sent a large number of prisoners to their deaths every day in this manner and she did so completely on her own. Because her beauty, Grese had numerous lovers in the Birkenau camp. There were rumors that at one time she was the girlfriend of Dr. Josef Mengele, because she joined him very often. But the most important affair she had was with an enlisted SS guard named

Franz Wolfgang Hatzinger, who later died of typhus in the Bergen-Belsen camp (Lengyelová, 2018, p. 263; Brown, 2004, p. 64).

Liquidation of Lager C and Her Promotion to *Rapportführerin*

Grese and Dr. Mengele led the final selection in compound BIIc (Perl with Preston 2017: 178-187). In December 1944, after the liquidation, the remaining strong prisoners were sent on transports to other camps as slave laborers and the sick prisoners were dispatched to the gas chambers, Grese was promoted to *Rapportführerin* in the main women´s camp of Birkenau (Cywiński et al., 2017, p. 77). The rank of *Rapportführerin* was the second highest rank for a female guard and it entailed Grese being responsible for the daily roll call parades, disciplinary investigation, and oversight of punishments (Ian Baxter, personal communication, December 11, 2020).

When the evacuation of Auschwitz began, Grese guarded one of the last transports sent from the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex to Ravensbrück. Other female guards from Auschwitz also assigned to the same transport bound for Ravensbrück. She was there only for a couple of weeks before being sent to Bergen-

Belsen camp in March 1945 (*Mahn-und Gedenkstatte* Ravensbrück, 2004).

Bergen-Belsen

Grese arrived in Bergen-Belsen with a huge prisoner transport in March 1945 and this time she was appointed as *Arbeitsdienstführerin* (the work service leader, who was responsible for assigning prisoners to their work details as well as overseeing the prisoners' labor). She also was given the duty of being a *Rapportführein*. Irma Grese was only at Bergen-Belsen for three and a half weeks and, even as the war was rapidly coming to a close, she continued her brutal treatment of the prisoners (Brown, 2004, p. 63, 65). Indeed, Grese did not relinquish her favorite activity--beating women on the face until they fell to the ground. The prisoners who knew Grese at Auschwitz could see that there had been some physical changes taking place with her physical appearance. For one thing, she seemed to be pale. As in Auschwitz-Birkenau, Irma Grese was attired in her work uniform and wore a cap with a peak (Expressen, 1945).

Grese did not attempt to improve the terrible conditions which existed in the camp and she seemed content to let thousands of prisoners to die of hunger (RFU, 2019). As the camp *Arbeitsdienstführerin,* it was her job to monitor the daily prisoners march to work and their return to the camp compound. She also supervised new transports that came into the camp. (Ian Baxter, personal communication, December 11, 2020) She had an office near the women´s camp gate (Verolme, 2016, p. 217-218). Since there were many children brought to Belsen with their mothers, Grese often visited them and tormented the young inmates psychologically.

Survivor Barry Spanjaard, who was a young boy when he was imprisoned in Belsen, described in his memoir how Grese often purposely stood in front of the starving inmates while eating cheese or a sandwich (Spanjaard, 1982, p. 147-148). I was lucky enough to get in contact with few survivors from Bergen-Belsen who saw Grese there. One of them Mr. Maurice Blik from the New Netherlands had a similar experience like Spanjaard and told me about one visit of Grese into their barracks with her dog while

enjoying eating an apple in front of the prisoners. He noted that all the while she had a smile on her face (Maurice Blik, personal communication, February 29, 2020). Mr. Tomi Reichental from Slovakia told me about Grese´s visit to the children´s barracks with her whip. He also told me that there were rumors that when Grese caught inmates trying to communicate through separate sections of Belsen camp, she beat them (Reichental, personal communication, December 16, 2018; January 9, 2019). Mr. Ivan Lefkovits from Slovakia was one of the children of Belsen and he remembered seeing Grese with her whip in the street. His mother warned him not to make eye contact with her because they learned from other inmates that even an eye contact could make her use her whip (Lefkovits, personal communication, February 5, 2019).

While watching the prisoner marches, Grese inspected them as they returned from work. She once attacked a Czech prisoner whom she found a knife hiding in her socks. The prisoner was Zdenka Fantl who shared her testimony with me. Fantl confirmed Grese was wearing a working uniform, a jacket and a cap with peak. She continued by saying that Grese “gave orders

not only to the prisoners but also other female guards and had huge power over everybody in the Belsen camp" (Zdenka Fantl, personal communication, December 7-8, 2018). As in Auschwitz-Birkenau, Irma Grese continued the practice of making the prisoners endure standing for lengthy period of time during roll calls. She and other guards sometime enjoyed throwing water over the female prisoners standing in freezing temperatures (Ian Baxter, personal communication, September 30, 2020).

Trial

Grese was arrested on April 17, 1945, shortly after British units liberated Bergen-Belsen. The liberators were in profoundly affected by what they saw in the camp, as appeared to be "hell on earth." In fact, even years after the event, many still found it difficult to articulate what they witnessed.

Irma Grese was put on trial with other guards on September 17, 1945 in Lüneburg. She and the camp commandant, Josef Kramer, became the immediate focus for the press covering the proceedings (*Mahn-und Gedenkstatte, Ravensbrück,* 2004). Even at the trial, Irma Grese made sure that she looked picture-perfect.

She also transformed her hairstyle as she now flaunted ". . . a coiffured look accenting her blonde ringlets" (Brown, 2004, 77). Journalists who observed the trial described how beautiful she was. However, most of the time her demeanor was cold, distant, and contemptuous. On some occasions the 21-year-old would laugh, but these incidents were usually the result of some false and absurd concern for the plight of the prisoners that a defense witness made. Once in a while she would also provide court photographers with a demure smile. One of the more damning admissions Irma Grese had to make in court was when she admitted that she continued to carry a whip in violation of the camp commandant's order against guards using them (Langbein, 2004, p. 400).

Witnesses described Grese´s extraordinary brutality and testified that she had taken part in selections for the gas chambers, shot at women prisoners, had beaten and kicked them, and forced them to kneel for hours at roll calls while holding heavy stones above their heads (Cywiński et al., 2017, p. 77).

The court sentenced her to death by hanging and the sentence was carried out on December 13, 1945. On the eve of

their executions, Grese is said to have sung Nazi songs in her cell with the two other condemned female guards (Langbein, 2004, 401). She was the youngest woman ever executed under the auspices of British legal practices (RFU, 2019).

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Nazi Women

Ellie Pearlman

The following focuses on just two of the many Nazi female perpetrators of the Holocaust. Gender cannot be ignored when analyzing the horrors that occurred during the Third Reich's attempt to eradicate European Jewry and other marginalized communities. Indoctrinated with hate, Nazi women such as Dr. Herta Oberheuser and Irma Grese blurred gender roles by imitating men. These same women glorified in taking part in abuse and murder.

Nazi Women

With the Nazi party's rise to power in Germany in 1933, National Socialists sought to return women to subordinate positions in society. Women were to return to their domestic spheres, and preferably, proudly have blonde hair, blue-eyed babies for the Fatherland. Despite the dominant misogynistic orientation of the ideology, Nazism attracted some women who saw the party as one that restored feminine honor and ideals, nevertheless, most women found it difficult to achieve any real

status within the Nazi party. Women could not join the elite sectors of the Nazi party; however, they could marry a Nazi official to gain authority or influence.

Outside of marriage, female allegiance further manifested itself via employment as *Aufseherinnen* [female overseer], or in other positions found throughout different sectors of the camps. The camp structure was one of the only ways which allowed for women to be promoted to better positions and therefore provide them with a sense of purpose. Despite traditional stereotypes which see women portrayed as homely and nurturing, Nazi women were responsible for many of the atrocities committed within the camps. Indoctrinated with hate, Nazi women such as Herta Oberheuser and Irma Grese blurred gender roles by directly participating in the Holocaust.

Herta Oberheuser

It was extremely rare in pre-WWII society for women to become practicing doctors. A woman's highest calling was motherhood. In 1934, Hitler said that a woman's world is her husband, her family, her children, and her house (Travis, 2018).

The Nazi party repealed laws that had previously protected women's rights and introduced new laws barring women from government and university positions, restricting women to the home.

Women's rights groups, such as the moderate *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine* [Federation of German Women's Associations] were disbanded; replaced with new social groups reinforcing Nazi values (Gruesbeck, n.d.). When the circumstances of the war became unfavorable to Nazi Germany in the early 1940s, more men were required to join the ranks on the front lines, allowing for women to be reluctantly called upon to fill positions which were predominantly held by men (Wodenshek, 2015). Despite the fact that women were granted a license to practice, they were always given less of a chance to establish themselves as practitioners.

Born in May of 1911 in Cologne, Germany, Dr. Herta Oberheuser received her medical degree in Bonn in 1937, specializing in Dermatology (Mikaberidze, 2013). Following the completion of her medical training, 26-year-old Oberheuser joined

the Nazi party as an intern and later as a physician for the League of German Maidens (Frankenburg, 2017). By 1940, Oberheuser was assigned as assistant physician to Dr. Karl Gebhardt, Chief Surgeon of the Nazi policing organization known as the *Schutzstaffel* or SS and was the personal physician to *Reichsführer* SS Heinrich Himmler (Mikaberidze, 2019). With hopes to expand their knowledge of infections, Dr. Gebhardt and Dr. Oberheuser arrived at Ravensbrück eager to use prisoners as their experimental victims (Helm, 2016).

Although Oberheuser was very much a doctor, as a female, she was never granted membership to the SS (Adele-Marie, 2019). Oberheuser, like many of the other women of the Third Reich took advantage of the "opportunity" granted them within the untraditional concentration camp domain. To prove herself, Oberheuser acted without regard for male superior officer's orders, often stepping outside of the chain of command to conduct her research. She performed some of the cruelest and most appalling medical experiments on prisoners; during her trial the survivors of her experiments stated that she purposely acted cruelly,

withholding beneficial medicines seemingly at her whim (Adele-Marie, 2019).

It was Oberheuser's job as a physician to examine the women and evaluate suitability for experiments. Prisoners had their legs cut open, bacteria placed in the wounds, and then sewed up to study the healing process (Galberg, 2020). To analyze battlefield wounds, prisoners were subject to gunshots and broken bones (Clarke et al., 2013). Blood flow would then be restricted to the injury and foreign objects such as wood or glass were introduced to simulate damage from shrapnel (Nuremberg Military Tribunals, 1949). Many prisoners were subjected to multiple rounds of injuries. Additionally, once a patient was no longer useful, Oberheuser would inject them with gasoline to kill them faster. These experiments were executed without the use of anesthesia or other medicines, causing immense pain, permanent nerve damage, paralysis, or death from shock (Nuremberg Military Tribunals, 1949).

Following the end of the war, Oberheuser was the only woman to stand trial at the Nuremberg Doctors' Trial. Victims' testimonies from the trial emphasized that the doctors ignored hygiene standards, using unsterilized medical dressings and instruments, while not adhering to the principles of asepsis (Stefaniak-Mrówczyńska, 1946). One of the patients who survived, Stanislaw Michalak, described removing the stitches of her wounds in the hope that letting the pus out would relieve some of the physical anguish brought on by the removal of parts of her leg bones (Doris Ronowicz Symonowicz, 1970). Describing the lack of sanitation, Zofia Stefaniak-Mrówczyńska, recalled that when doctors removed the plaster from her leg, they found a nest of bugs in her wound (Symonowicz, 1970).

In August of 1947, Oberheuser was found guilty of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity and sentenced to 20 years in prison for her part in conducting human experimentation at Ravensbrück (Annas & Grodin, 1992). After just five years in prison, she was released for good behavior and returned to work as a doctor at a family medical practice

(Wodenshek, 2015).

After six years, she was recognized by a former Ravensbrück inmate, resulting in the loss of her medical license. While Oberheuser's victims survived the horrific experiments she conducted, they were left to suffer permanent and painful damages while she resumed a normal life until her death in 1978, unmarred by her past actions (Townsend, 1958). Dr. Herta Oberheuser's strength and success within the male-dominated Nazi medical field inspired other female Nazis like Irma Grese to have the confidence to try and rise through the ranks, despite the sexism of Nazi ideology.

Irma Grese

Irma Grese, also known as The Beautiful Beast, was born to Berta and Alfred Grese, on October 7th, 1923. She grew up in Wrechen, Mecklenburg, just 50 miles north of Berlin, as one of five children, in a rural community where her conservative, churchgoing father worked as a dairy farmer (Daniel Patrick Brown, 2004). When Grese was just a child, her mother committed

suicide, leaving Grese and her siblings to be raised by her abusive father. In 1933, the Nazi Party enacted the Enabling Act. This act mandated all schools teach Nazi ideals and ideas to students. This is where Grese's Nazi indoctrination began.

Like her sisters, Grese wanted to join the highly romanticized *Bund Deutscher Mädel* or BDM, the female version of the Hitler youth (Adele-Marie, 2012). Grese's father forbade his daughters from joining the BDM or any other Nazi organization (Southern, 2018), but per contra, the BDM became compulsory for all Aryan female youth (The League of German Girls , 2015). Grese's troubled home left her seeking support and acceptance which she found as a member of the BDM, but as a result of her membership, tensions with her father escalated.

After unsuccessfully pursuing careers in farming and business, Grese settled for an apprenticeship as a nurse's aide under the guidance of Dr. Karl Gebhardt and Dr. Herta Oberheuser, at the SS convalescent Hohenlychen Medical Hospital (Silver, 2011). Gebhardt took a special interest in Grese, as she was very young, beautiful, and eager. Although Grese would

not succeed within the medical field, Gebhardt recognized Grese's 'ambition', and wanted her to put forth what 'talents' she did have to work in furthering the success of the Third Reich (Adele-Marie, 2019).

When a position at the all-women's camp for a new female-guard became available, Gebhart helped eighteen-year-old Grese get the job. Having been trained by Nazis, and previously exposed to the Ravensbrück experiments performed by Oberheuser and the other SS doctors at Hohenlychen, the young, impressionable girl had been desensitized to the sadistic treatment of Nazi prisoners and would stop at nothing to be seen as an equal to her male counterparts, no matter the human cost (Adele-Marie, 2019). Grese quickly made her way up the latter as the youngest Nazi woman with status, authority, and relative autonomy as compared to other women who worked for the SS.

In 1943 she was promoted to a guard position at Auschwitz-Birkenau. There, at age 21, Grese was placed in charge of 30,000 Jewish female prisoners. Grese relished her power and

used it to abuse, and rape prisoners. She also took great joy and sexual gratification from watching the torture of the prisoners by camp doctors, sometimes participating in the torture despite not being a doctor (Adele-Marie, 2019).

Per various recollections of survivors, Grese is said to have killed at least 30 people per day. Grese was also notorious for setting vicious dogs on prisoners as part of her brutal reign in the Birkenau women's camp. Among Grese's other notorious exploits at Auschwitz-Birkenau was tying the legs together of a woman about to give birth and watching her writhe in agony (Southern, 2018). Grese's violent nature did not always sit well with the other SS men, as they saw her actions as beyond the scope of what they considered "appropriate" for a female guard (Adele-Marie, 2019). However, she used her youth and sexual attractiveness as a way to make up for this.

Gisella Perl, an inmate physician, recalls some of Grese's masochistic behaviors during operations:

> I happened to look up and encountered the most horrible sight I have ever seen, the memory of which will haunt me

> for the rest of my life. Irma Grese was enjoying the sight of this human suffering. Her tense body swung back and forth in a revealing, rhythmical motion. Her cheeks were flushed, and her wide-open eyes had the rigid, staring look of complete sexual paroxysm. She did this on multiple occasions so she could relive this sadistic moment repeatedly. She always came to watch the operations of these women whose breasts had been slashed open and had become infected with the lice and dirt which pervaded the women's camp. (Southern, 2018)

Perl also noted how Grese would invariably arrive to watch the operation, kicking the victim if their screams interfered with her masturbating pleasure and "giving herself completely to the orgasmic spasms which shook her entire body and made saliva run down from the corner of her mouth" (Southern, 2018).

On June 16, 1945, Grese was indicted with Josef Kramer and 43 other Belsen personnel on charges of murder and maltreatment of prisoners. During the Nuremberg trial investigation interrogations, Grese stood firm, stating that she was

"convinced all that had happened was right" (Southern, 2018). Grese was convicted and sentenced to be hanged, along with two other female guards. She was executed on the morning of December 13, 1945, in Hamelin prison. Grese remained unrepentant and unremorseful till her execution, continuing to believe that her acts were justified by the principles on which Nazism was based.

The cases of Dr. Herta Oberheuser and Irma Grese demonstrate just two of many women who attained great power under the Nazi regime. All of the concentration camps were deadly, regardless these women and their particularly sadistic approaches immensely contributed to the survivor's memorable trauma. While Oberheuser and Grese were not unique in their participation as there were many disturbing Nazi women, they were still believed to be remarkably ruinous.

While we can learn about Oberheuser and Grese because they were found and put on trial, it must be considered that there were many more like these women who managed to escape

justices' grip. These women had extensive scope for action considering the male-oriented hierarchy in concentration camps and the killing center, and rather than taking culpability, they took advantage of their situation to try and prove themselves and break through the glass ceiling. Learning about these Nazi women was a chilling reminder that women can be just as cruel as men and even try to outdo their male counterparts, no matter the cost. The victims' voices cannot be forgotten, but, perhaps, to understand why we must understand them. Studying and remembering the Holocaust is of dire importance as understanding the past is key to changing the future. It is important to remember that gender cannot be ignored when analyzing the heinousness that occurred during the Third Reich's attempt to eradicate European Jewry and other marginalized communities.

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Chapter Seven: The Holocaust in the East

Wendy Adele-Marie

The Nazi attacks on Eastern European areas were horrific. Many students are not aware of the events that took place in Rumbala. On November 30 and December 8, 1941, a total 26,000 people were murdered in the outskirts of Riga. Of these 25,000 were Latvian citizens and about 1,000 were brought in from the Third Reich. Please (WARNING: graphic textual descriptions) read: Remembering Rumbula

As Adam Yunis illustrates in his critical essay, accounts and studies from the East were obstructed by the emergent Cold War. Eastern survivors that I have spoken with bolster the conclusions that Yunis draws in that the designation of a survivor for those in the East was complicated and varied from their western counterparts.

The Memory of the Holocaust on the Nazi Occupied Territory of the Former Soviet Union

Adam Yunis

The Nazi Holocaust in the East was one of the most destructive events in history and the memory of this time continues to impact Soviet survivors and global politics. The pace of memory and remembrance was impacted greatly by post war social and political conditions, creating a silence that was not present in Central and Western Europe. The lack of access to Soviet records, the fall of the Soviet Union and a wave of Jewish immigrants in the 1980s and 1990s to the U.S. all contributed to a greater recognition of the Holocaust by Bullets in the East. Many Soviet Holocaust survivors did not consider themselves survivors, and the USSR generally did not recognize the separate experience of Jews due to a focus on the uniform suffering of the Soviet people. The lack of research into the details of Nazi operations in the USSR has been confronted by several groups that seek to shed light on places of mass murder. This essay will discuss the memory of the

Holocaust in the former Soviet Union and recent efforts to both recognize Jewish suffering during the war and research sites of mass killing.

The memory of the Holocaust in the former Soviet Union has developed at a slower pace than in Central and Western Europe due to several factors to be discussed. During the existence of the Soviet Union, Soviet authorities cultivated their own interpretation of historical memory which aimed to dismiss existing ethnic tension, conceal the effects of the Soviet invasion of Eastern Europe in 1939, and sought to replace the memories of individuals and communities with the narrative of the new imagined community-the Soviet people. The fall of the Soviet Union, a wave of Jewish immigration to the United States and Israel, and significant increase in research into the Holocaust in the FSU (Former Soviet Union) all contributed to a greater understanding of the Holocaust by Bullets and recognition of Soviet survivors. This essay will discuss the memory of the Holocaust on the Nazi occupied territory of the former Soviet Union and recent efforts to both document and recognize the Soviet Jewish experience.

While decades of silences would follow, immediate wartime and post-war research was done to compile experiences of Soviet Jewry under Nazism. Chief among this was the work done by Soviet Jewish novelist Ilya Ehrenburg and Soviet Jewish war correspondent Vasilij Grossman. Grossman interviewed Jewish survivors as well as non-Jewish wartime residents about the fate of Soviet Jews and documented the liberation of Treblinka and Majdanek, publishing some of the first accounts of Nazi killing centers. The material intended to form *The Black Book: The Ruthless Murder of Jews by German-Fascist Invaders Throughout the Temporarily Occupied Regions of the Soviet Union and in the Death Camps of Poland during the War 1941-1945*, to be published in 1946 in Russian and Yiddish.

The correspondence between Grossman and Ehrenburg is telling, as it predicts future Soviet treatment of the Holocaust. Grossman observed that the word ‘Jews’ was used too frequently and suggested to avoid repetition of this word in order not to irritate the reader and to substitute it with general terms like

'people or 'civilians'' (Baranova, 2015). On October 7th, 1947, the decision was made by Department for Propaganda of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist party that since the book "contains grave political errors", it "may not be published." All copies were sent to storage warehouses where they were destroyed in 1948 (Baranova, 2015). Thus, because it singled out Jewish suffering and because it questioned the image of friendship of peoples in Soviet society, the major and probably the only post-war work that treated the Holocaust in the Soviet Union as a separate Jewish phenomenon was never published in the USSR. Copies survived and were later published in Yiddish, English and eventually in Russian after the fall of the Soviet Union.

The immediate post war Stalinist censorship also prevented the publishing of works of Soviet Jewish photographers who were on the front lines documenting the Nazi Holocaust with the Soviet Army. Professor of Jewish History at the University of Colorado, David Shneer, has recently written *Through Soviet Jewish Eyes* (2010), which published for the first time many photographs taken by an elite group of two dozen Soviet-Jewish photographers who

were charged by the Stalinist state to document the Holocaust and other crimes against Soviet citizens. An important work in the study of Soviet Jewry, it removes Jews and their relationship to the Soviet Union from a lens of repression and silence, and instead shows Soviet Jewish agency in their own struggle and in their contributions to building the Soviet Union and documenting Nazi crimes. Post-war Stalinist antisemitism had the effect of silencing the patriotic contributions Jews had made to the Soviet Union, and future work must continue to recognize that the Jewish struggle to document Nazi crimes was also a part of a larger patriotic contribution that Soviet Jews made during the war.

Soviet historiography in the post war decades that followed the Second World War did not treat the Holocaust as a separate, Jewish event and fate. The event was not erased from official Soviet history but adapted within the confines of the post war ideological framework. Soviet martyrdom emphasized a universal suffering and the defeat of the racist and murderous Nazism (Baranova, 2015). Discouraging any emphasis of the Jewish origin

of Nazi policies became standard in Soviet history and in public commemorations.

American Jewish scholar Zvi Gitelman (1991) in his article "Politics and the Historiography of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union" claims that a survey of Soviet literature reveals that there was no uniform treatment of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union. Some works do admit and describe a Jewish tragedy, others discuss some parts, while others prefer to refrain from any national and ethnic origin of victims. Unity among all Soviet people meant not interrogating the recent past. This was the goal of Soviet policy after the Second World War. The Soviets authorities viewed any nationalist movement as a threat to its control. To create a Soviet identity, this unifying experience of suffering played a large role in creating a feeling of community among all Soviet people. Therefore, recognition of a separate experience, a Jewish tragedy, one that involved local collaboration and capitalized on native antisemitism, did not fit Soviet postwar interests, meaning it could not exist.

Antisemitism certainly played a role in Soviet treatment of the Holocaust, but not addressing how the Holocaust occurred in the western territories-Western Belarus, Western Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, areas briefly annexed by the Soviet Union from 1939-41, also had the practical concern of suppressing ethnic tension. The reluctance to address collaboration in accounts of Nazi massacres is reflective of Soviet acknowledgment of existing antisemitism among its population. Soviet authorities tried to avoid any discussion that could explain why so many people in Soviet society were so inflicted by antisemitism and hostile to the existing Soviet regime of '39-41, that they participated in Nazi massacres. By doing this, Soviet authorities suppressed the fact that the occupation of Eastern Europe and the Baltic by the Soviet Union from '39-41 created an enormous amount of antisemitism, local populations scapegoating the Jews for their problems and associating Jews with the new communist regime. For Soviet authorities it was better not to get into the details of how the Holocaust occurred in the Soviet Union, to assign the killing of

Jews to the Nazis as a part of their greater policy for Europe which involved cruelty and killings of every Soviet ethnic group.

This is not to say that there were not efforts by individuals in the Soviet Union to commemorate the Holocaust. The most famous of these efforts was the controversy over the ravine at Babi Yar. Babi Yar was a site near Kiev, where 33,771 Jews were killed in 2 days -September 29-30, and where 100,000 people would be murdered. When the war ended, no monument was placed there to commemorate this event and there were plans to turn this site into a park and a stadium.

Soviet writer Evgeniy Evtushenko published the famous poem "*Бабий Яр"* [Babi Yar]. The poem spoke not only of Jews murdered in Babi Yar but of Soviet mistreatment of Jews. Famous Soviet composer Dmitry Shostakovich included the poem in his Symphony No. 13 (Lebovic, 2017). These artistic and musical pieces by Soviet intellectuals attracted world attention to the problem of Soviet remembrance of the Holocaust and revealed that Soviet society was far from free of antisemitism. It also importantly demonstrated that some intellectuals were

uncomfortable with the lack of commemoration of Jewish suffering in the war. Finally, public pressure resulted in a memorial placed at Babi Yar, but the inscription reads: “here in 1941- 1943, the German fascist invaders executed more than 100.000 citizens of Kiev and prisoners of war”. Despite the fact that more than 30 percent of victims killed by the Nazis in Babi Yar were Jews, as well as the fact that over one million Ukrainian Jews were murdered in the Holocaust by the Nazis and Ukrainian militias, there was no reference to a Jewish tragedy.

The Fall of Communism

The fall of the Soviet Union brought about many changes to Holocaust research and memory in the former Soviet Union. As immigration restrictions began to loosen, there was a large increase in Jewish immigration to the United States and Israel during the 80s and 90s. This played a crucial role in the growth of recognition of Soviet survivors. Soviet Jews who had survived the Holocaust did not find an environment in the Soviet Union that was receptive to any recognition of the tragedy of Soviet Jewry. Antisemitism remained a constant force for Jews in the Soviet Union in the post-

war period, as religion of any kind was actively suppressed in the Soviet territories. Mentioning the Jewish roots of the tragedy of that was the Holocaust by Bullets was not advisable, and for many second-generation survivors, children who fled or hid with their parents, they grew up not knowing the details of their survival. The situation of Jews is further complicated by the fact that they were living in areas where local people took part in the killing of Soviet Jews. This created a prominent sentiment that it was best to move on and not bring up any history that could hurt their current situation. Upon immigration to the United States and Israel, there came opportunities for Jewish survivors from the USSR to finally come out and speak about their experiences.

The 1990s saw an increase in Holocaust documentation, organizations like the Shoah foundation recorded survivor testimony in the United States, this coincided with the immigration of Soviet survivors whose stories had never been fully recognized or told. Many recent Jewish immigrants to the U.S. did not view themselves as survivors, as the dominant view in the latter half of the 20th century associated a survivor with someone who had

survived a Nazi concentration camp. This perception of the Holocaust and survivors was harmful as it does not account for those who hid, fled, or even fought against the Nazis. With the fall of the Soviet Union, new opportunities for researchers and historians developed to explore the Holocaust by Bullets, as Soviet archives were opened, and historians and researchers could freely work in areas of mass killing. This combination of new historical research of the Holocaust in the FSU, and the awakening of memory by Soviet Jews with the help of American Jewish organizations allowed for greater recognition and publication of the brutality of Nazi and their collaborators' actions.

It also allowed for Soviet survivors to receive recognition for their suffering and be thought of as Holocaust survivors, their individual and familial stories of survival under the most horrible conditions documented by historical institutions and NGOs. This helped in the creation of a Soviet Jewish survivor identity for those now living abroad.

Politics of Memory

A contentious politics of memory developed in the newly created states after the fall of the USSR. With independence from the USSR came a new issue of how these states would commemorate their history. Ukrainian, Latvian, Belarusian, Estonian involvement in the Holocaust is generally not recognized by their respective governments, and public memorials of the Holocaust have created political or social problems. The question of the local population's collaboration with the Nazis remains the most problematic issue. This issue arose during the 2014-onging conflict in Eastern Ukraine, where some Ukrainian militia groups and protesters evoked Nazi imagery, tattoos and uniforms in their rebellion.

Many celebrated Stephen Bandera, founder of the OUN B, an organization that collaborated with Nazi Germany and that murdered thousands of Jews as well as perpetrated a brutal ethnic cleansing campaign against Poles in Eastern Galicia, killing between 50,000 and 100,000 (Snyder, 2003). The OUN B and Bandera's Ukrainian ultra-nationalism ideology have remained a constant force on the Ukrainian far right.

The cycle then begins of Russian propaganda claiming that there is a broad sympathy to Neo Nazism in Ukraine, which prevents Ukrainian society from addressing the Ukrainian far right and their history, as they do not want to feed into Russian propaganda. Russian nationalism has also been on a dramatic rise, with a mythical version of Russia's history at its core. History remains a constant political issue in the states of the former Soviet Union.

On one hand, progress has evidently been made in comparison with the Soviet era and the years of Perestroika. On the other hand, public discourse often remains either hostile or uninformed about what took place. Significant progress remains in the former Soviet Union for Holocaust remembrance, as the recent war and unrest in Ukraine has shown a weaponization of history on both sides of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

Recent Research into the Holocaust by Bullets

State run organizations and NGOs emerged after the fall of the FSU that now document and research the Holocaust in the former Soviet Union. This essay will focus on the work of Father

Patrick Debois. Debois was the grandson of a French soldier who had been deported the Nazi prison camp Rava-Ruska, located on the Ukrainian-Polish border (Desbois, 2008). This area has a particularly brutal war history, the Holocaust and other ethnic based killings still haunt the region. After being ordained in 1986, Debois worked with the Jewish community of France in a variety of roles facilitating relations between the Catholic and Jewish communities, eventually serving nationally as the secretary of the French conference of Bishops for Relations with the Jewish community from 1999 to 2016.

Due to his grandfather's experiences and silence about the Holocaust, Debois developed an intense interest in the Holocaust, starting from childhood. In 2002 he travelled to Ukraine to visit where his father was imprisoned and to pay his respects to the Jewish victims. Upon arrival he did not see a marking or commemoration to the victims of the Holocaust in Ukraine. Desbois knew that before World War II more than 15,000 Jews had lived in the town, but when he asked to see where they had been murdered, the mayor brushed him off and said no one knew

anything about it. "How could more than 10,000 Jews be killed in the village and nobody knows?" he says. "I knew I needed to find out what happened. So, I came back two times, three times, four times to Rawa-Ruska. And then the mayor lost the election, and a new mayor was elected, much less Soviet" (Breger, 2011). Upon returning the new mayor led Desbois to a forest, a place of mass killing, where 50 elderly men and women gathered to tell of their experiences witnessing the Holocaust.

They gave detailed testimony to the murder of the Jewish community in their city. This testimony had never been given before, and Desbois saw an opportunity for a larger scale project. Desbois realized what a wealth of information on the Holocaust was available on the Holocaust in Eastern Europe if you interviewed the last witnesses and marked sites of killing. In order to right the historical wrong of neglecting areas of mass killing, Desbois helped found Yahad-In Unum, combing the Hebrew word-Yahad, meaning "together," with the Latin phrase In Unum, meaning "in one."

The global organization collects eyewitness testimony and forensic evidence about the mass killing of Jews and Roma in Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, Moldova and Romania between 1941 and 1944. Local contemporary witnesses are interviewed about the mass shootings that occurred near their homes and the mass graves are located and documented. Desbois (2008) estimates that there are no less than 1 million victims buried in 1,200 graves in Ukraine. Yahad-In Unum's work is crucial to counter claims of Holocaust deniers who use lack of official documentation to makes claims on the validity of Holocaust evidence. Yahad-In Unum has received widespread praise among Holocaust institutions and their work has documented at this moment 1,843 execution sites.

Yahad-In Unum hopes by exposing evidence of these lesser-known crimes against humanity, they are bringing closure to the memory of the victims. A forward-thinking organization, they hope to spread awareness of the need to recognize and denounce the ongoing epidemic of global genocide. Yahad-In Unum and Patrick Desbois have also worked to document the Yazidi

genocide in Iraq committed by the Islamic State. As time passes, it seems that NGOs will be some of the leading institutions that seek to properly commemorate and document the Holocaust by Bullets in the former Soviet Union. Father Debois and his team have recently interviewed Chicago Holocaust survivors from the FSU who witnessed or learned about the killings of their families.

The Soviet Jewish Experience

Significant progress has been made in the documentation of killing sites and in remembrance of Soviet Jewish victims of the Holocaust and in recognition of the survivors from the USSR. This work has had the unfortunate burden of beginning just as the last survivor and witness generations reach old age. Only since the fall of the Soviet Union have Soviet Jews gained an opportunity to tell their stories of survival and commemorate their family members murdered by the Nazis. Crucial to this development has been the work of individuals and organizations to recognize the separate experiences of Jews during the war, and document and research the Holocaust by Bullets in Eastern Europe. During the post war years of the USSR, Soviet authorities prevented the recognition of a

separate Jewish experience during WWII due to political concerns and antisemitism. The fall of the USSR allowed for Jewish immigration to places where some found communities more welcome to hearing their stories of persecution.

There is still much work to do in gaining wider recognition for Soviet Jewish survivors. Local to Chicago, Holocaust Community Services is an organization that seeks to publicize and educate on the Holocaust in the former Soviet Union and document the stories of Soviet Jewish Holocaust survivors that now live in the United States. Abroad, the politics of memory of the Holocaust in the former Soviet states often remains contentious, with patriotic celebration of history often turning into a whitewashing of collaboration with the Nazis. The Holocaust by Bullets, and those Soviet Jews who survived must be a crucial part of any narrative of the Holocaust. The final generation of Soviet survivors are now in old age, many children or teenagers during the war. Their memories of their families murdered by the Nazis, and often of their parents who never got a chance to speak about their survival, offer some of our last personal connections to the

victims of the Holocaust. Their stories must be listened to and documented. Soviet survivor Yakov Mozyrsky was interviewed only recently on his wartime experience as a Jewish child. His father had fought with the Soviet army for the complete duration of the war. He recounts:

> In October 1945 Papa was discharged and came back to Timashevo to find us, and together we returned to Kiev. I remember that we walked along poorly lit railroads to the house in which we lived before the war. No one knew what to expect. I stumbled and fell on a rail. When Dad picked me up and lifted me up high, I saw tears in his eyes. These were the eyes of a man who had gone through the entire war, who had seen blood and death, who was wounded several times, and who now simply got scared for his son. These eyes I would never forget. (Mozyrsky, 2020)

For this last generation of Soviet survivors, the memories of the war never left, we should cherish the opportunity to learn from and recognize the Soviet Jewish experience.

Further Resources

Books

Through Soviet Jewish Eyes: Photography, War and the Holocaust by David Shneer

Never Heard Never Forget produced by Holocaust Community Services. A compilation of Soviet Jewish survivor's stories who immigrated to United States and settled in Chicago.

The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest's Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews by Patrick Desbois. Also see https://www.yahadinunum.org/

A Writer at War: A Soviet Journalist with the Red Army, 1941-1945 by Vasily Grossman. Grossman takes the reader through the chaos of the Nazi invasion to the liberation of Nazi death camps. A Soviet Jew, Grossman was popular among soldiers for his honest reporting of the front. Grossman intended to publish his accounts of the Nazi Holocaust in *The Black Book of Soviet Jewry*, which eventually was published in English and is also available to read.

The Bones of Berdichev: The Life and Fate of Vasily Grossman by John Garrad and Carol Garrad

Holocaust in the Ukraine by Boris Zabarko

The Ravine: A Family, A Photograph, a Holocaust Massacre Revealed by Wendy Lower

In Chicago

Professor Elliot Lefkowitz recorded around 50 video interviews with survivors from FSU, which are all in the Illinois Holocaust Museum's collection. These interviews offer a great resource for anyone looking to research the FSU further and watch eye-witness testimony.

Films

Come and See (1985) directed by Elem Klimov. An intense and historically accurate depiction of the brutality of war in the FSU. Considered one of the best movies about war ever made, this film is helpful for understanding the conditions many Soviet survivors "fled" from, as the verbiage used does not accurately describe the horrors many endured to survive.

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Chapter Eight: Holocaust, Architecture, Film, and Music

This chapter has several components to it. We examine architecture with Nathan Harpaz, then Holocaust biographical film with Phyllis Lassner, and finally music in the Holocaust with Susan Eischeid. Examining the Holocaust through these unique lenses provide a deeper understanding of the many facets of Holocaust studies.

Architect Alexander Levy: Berlin – Tel Aviv – Auschwitz

Nathan Harpaz

When I was working on my book *Zionist Architecture and Town Planning: The Building of Tel Aviv (1919 - 1929),* I found in the intriguing life of architect Alexander Levy, who is one of the central figures in this book, several connections to my family's history. Levy and my maternal grandfather Moshe Yehuda Kaplan acquired their artistic education in Berlin, both got involved with Zionism and arrived in Tel Aviv during the same year (1920), and both struggled financially trying to pursue their professions. My grandfather stayed in Tel Aviv despite the difficulties, while Levy

returned to Europe and, like my paternal grandparents Sarah and Isiah Fenster and my uncle Max Fenster from Vienna, perished in Auschwitz. This essay is an homage to architect Alexander Levy and his tragic saga. Levy offered his services to the Zionist Organization in Berlin, the hub of Zionism at that time, during a crucial time after World War I, when a new hope for massive immigration to the Land of Israel was expected. Ironically, Levy, who attempted to build an advanced shelter for future persecuted Jews in then Palestine, returned to Europe after his failed career to be victimized by the Nazi regime.

Architect Alexander Levy (1883-1942) expressed interest in Zionism after finishing his studies in architecture and starting work for a building company in Berlin in 1907. Levy followed the idea of re-establishing the Jewish state, serving as a shelter or refuge to Jews escaping from antisemitism. In 1908, he offered his services as an architect to Arthur Ruppin (1876-1943), then the director of the Palestine office of the Zionist Organization in Jaffa. In November of 1912, Levy prepared four different housing plans for new immigrants in Palestine, and a year later, he proposed to

organize an exhibition on housing to be displayed during the eleventh Congress in Vienna. In the same year, he also sent several proposals for building projects, including the port of Jaffa, prototypes for residential units, housing for new Yemenite Jewish immigrants, a plan for a hotel, and a new approach to building materials. None of Levy's proposals were accepted by the Zionist Organization (Meyer-Maril, 1994).

In 1913, Levy applied for two positions in Palestine offered by the Zionist Organization, but he failed to obtain either of them. The position of building engineer in Palestine was given to Richard Michel, and the position of the director of the technical department in Palestine was given to Wilhelm Hecker. Levy sent an angry letter to Ruppin, but he still proposed cooperation in planning working-class housing. Ruppin, in his reply, explained to Levy that the difficult conditions in Palestine prevented his office from hiring architects, and he encouraged Levy to move to Palestine and practice as a private architect (Meyer-Mari,1994).

In the spring of 1919, with the support of the Association of Jewish Architects and Engineers, Levy founded a new

organization, the Association of the Builders of the Land of Israel. The goal of the Association of the Builders of the Land of Israel was to resolve the problems of building and housing in Palestine, accompanying the anticipated mass immigration of Jews to the land of Israel. In May of 1919, the association organized a conference on future building in Palestine, including an exhibition of plans and models of housing solutions. The ideas introduced in the exhibition were published with plans and photos by Alexander Levy in Davis Trietsch's magazine *Volk und Land.* Levy's essay in this magazine titled "On Building and Housing" spread over four issues between September and November 1919. The majority of the text and a portion of the illustrations for Levy's future book was published in this magazine.

In May of 1920, Levy proposed another plan to the Builder Company in London to work together on the foundation of a quarry, a cement factory, a wood workshop, and machinery shops to assist with the building of 1000 small dwellings per year. This plan was also rejected. In the same year, Levy continued to promote his ideas and recruit architects to the Association of the

Builders of the Land of Israel, and in Berlin, he published a 56-page booklet entitled *Building and Housing in New Palestine*.

The publication of Alexander Levy's *Building and Housing in New Palestine* is the most comprehensive proposal for inexpensive and rapid building construction in the early days of the Zionist movement. It meticulously and methodologically reviews the most advanced European theories and studies relevant to the topic and concludes with concrete and realistic recommendations for implementation. The plan covers such topics as the company's role in initiating and executing building construction, the crucial availability of materials, the presentation of different types of accommodations, and the utilization of standardization of materials and labor techniques.

The historical rationale for Levy's plan was in the new political arena that emerged after World War I: the end of the Ottoman occupation of Palestine and the beginning of the British mandate. In the publication, Levy expressed his hope that soon the British administration would permit a large number of Jewish immigrants to settle in Palestine, and therefore a detailed and

practical plan would be needed to construct mass housing. This prediction of mass Jewish immigration to Palestine was triggered by the Balfour Declaration of 1917, where the British government recognized the rights of the Jewish people to establish their homeland in Palestine, and it was intensified later when the British governed the region after the war. Levy's plan was part of massive post-war publications that dealt with the expectations of a "New Palestine."

Levy based his plan on current European concepts, and, as a scientist, he presented data from the field, theories of prominent experts, and then practical conclusions. Like a classical technocrat, Levy filled his writing with plenty of details like statistics, costs, and dimensions to give his plan credibility and practicality, but he ignored significant obstacles that might derail his proposal.

From a personal perspective, Levy demonstrated throughout his publication integrity and truthfulness through his comments, and sometimes he revealed outspoken criticism. He stated that laymen led current Jewish construction in Palestine without any skill and very few notable achievements. Furthermore,

he labeled the administrators in charge of building construction in Palestine “primitive” and lacking in business skills due to philanthropic dependency and patronage. Ironically, with his blunt attitude, Levy was a freethinker himself and an unconventional scholar, which might illuminate his difficulties with promoting his plan to the Zionist Organization during his activities in Berlin and later when he worked in Tel Aviv.

Alexander Levy finally paid attention to Dr. Ruppin’s advice, and he arrived in Palestine in 1920, the same year that he published his book. Levy came to Tel Aviv, together with Nadja Strasser (1871-1955), a writer concentrating on socialism and feminism in a Jewish context. They met each other in Berlin after Strasser studied at Vienna University (Archive of the International Institute of Social History).

Upon arrival to Tel Aviv, Levy founded the building company Kedem (Orient) based on the same idea as the Association of the Builders of the Land of Israel in Berlin. Levy converted the Bella Vista Hotel in Jaffa into the company’s headquarters, including a department for public works, a

department for architectural design, a laboratory for examining local and imported building materials, and carpentry and metal workshops. The movie hall of the former hotel became a drawing room and exhibition space, and the employees of the company lived in other rooms. The company's early projects included the construction of roads in Tel Aviv and the building of the experimental agricultural station near the Herzliya Hebrew High School in 1921, a project initiated by the Zionist leader Otto Warburg who wrote the introduction to Levy's publication in Berlin (Meyer-Maril, 1994).[i]

One of the early experiments with the modern-oriental style in Tel Aviv was conducted by Alexander Levy. His first major private commissioned project was the residence for Menachem Ussishkin (1863-1941), the Zionist leader and head of the Jewish National Fund.

At the peak of the cooperation between the Bezalel Art Academy and Tel Aviv architects in 1924, Alexander Levy participated in an exhibition of Tel Aviv architecture at Bezalel in Jerusalem. One of the exhibition's goals was to encourage the use

of Bezalel's artistic ceramic tiles in Tel Aviv. That event also facilitated the development of a personal relationship between Levy and Boris Schatz, the founder and head of the academy, and they began to correspond with each other(Meyer-Maril, 1994). Despite the close relations with Schatz Levy, inspiration from Bezalel was manifested only in his few early designs.

Ironically, Alexander Levy, who rejected eclecticism and spoke out against "façade artists" in his Berlin publication, became one of the most eclectic architects in Tel Aviv. He designed the Kleisler house as a neo-classical building decorated with pilasters, cement reliefs, and even Greek metopes and triglyphs. In the Lifshitz House, Levy kept the classical tradition of rustic stone on the ground floor, and he added cement-made classical ornamentation throughout the façade. In the same year, Levy designed the Ussishkin House utilizing a modern oriental style, and in the Schlossberg House, he attached oriental arches to a western European building.

The peak of the eclectic trend in the architecture of Tel Aviv in the mid-1920s can be noticed in the exotic building that

Alexander Levy designed for Morris Bloch on the intersection of three streets. The three-story building was built on a lot shaped like a triangle and featured arched porches on each floor. The stepped roof in the front of the building granted the structure the name "The Pagoda House."

After his arrival to Tel Aviv, Levy attempted to re-establish the settlement company that he led in Berlin, and through its activities, he tried to implement his ideas as presented in his book. After several projects under his company, Kedem, Levy struggled financially and gradually compromised his ideal architectural concepts. This early monetary difficulty can be seen in his advertisement posted in the Haaretz newspaper in 1921: "One who is willing to invest money in the purpose of gaining decent profits should build houses in Tel Aviv by the architect Alexander Levy, the author of the book *Building and Housing in New Palestine*." In this advertisement, Levy departs from his idealistic approach to building in Palestine and tries to convince potential clients to initiate building construction for investment. The illustration of a plain functional building in this advertisement is not a typical

design for Levy's buildings in Tel Aviv at that time. The majority of Levy's designs were vastly eclectic, except his 1924 renovation of a house on Rothschild Boulevard.

In the same year that Alexander Levy designed one of the most eclectic and picturesque buildings in Tel Aviv (the Pagoda House, 1925), he bitterly criticized the state of the city's architecture:

> What we need now is a system and not temporality. Tel Aviv must turn into a city, organic structure, and not a chaos of streets and buildings. Tel Aviv also must become a city of the Land of Israel and not the new Pinsk [a town in Belarus] … Even the greatest friend of Tel Aviv would not be able to claim that the construction of the city was based on a serious principle. On a vast area of the city there is not one awkward street that can be deemed rational. (Levy, 1925)

Levy's statement on the chaotic and irrational architectural design of Tel Aviv is another example of the gap between his desired,

ideal concepts and the gloomy reality of his inability to elevate the city to a professional and advanced level.

Despite a relatively successful career in the early 1920s, and with the decline of building in Tel Aviv in the late 1920s, architect Alexander Levy struggled financially. His criticisms of the establishment and the state of architecture in Tel Aviv raised his level of frustration, and in 1927, the beginning of the economic crisis, he and Nadja Strasser left Palestine and returned to Berlin.

Three years after leaving Tel Aviv to return to Germany, Alexander Levy finally materialized one of his theoretical concepts, and in 1930 he started a company that manufactured small, compact houses. Levy, who changed his last name to Lee, named the company "Lee Klienhausbau," and he displayed models of such houses in an exhibition in 1932, together with other architects, including Walter Gropius, Bruno Taut, and Erich Mendelsohn. As the economic crisis worsened in Germany, Levy's company prospered from the need for inexpensive accommodations. Unfortunately, Levy's architectural success lasted for only a few years, and after the rise of the Nazi regime, he

and Nadja Strasser fled to France. During this time, he managed to design several buildings in Paris, and he also wrote several essays, including the “History of Jewish Achievements.” Levy, motivated by his past failures and frustrations, continued to criticize the Zionist Organization on the same issues he argued about during his careers in Berlin and Tel Aviv.

Celebrated German architect Peter Behrens, whom Levy admired and inspired from, was called back to Germany in 1936 from the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts to teach at the Prussian Academy of Fine Arts under Hitler's approval. Behrens participated in Hitler’s grand urban plan for Berlin, and he worked under the chief Nazi architect Albert Speer. Behrens died from a heart attack in the Hotel Bristol in Berlin in 1940.

Similarly, German architect Paul Schultze-Naumburg, whom Levy appreciated in his book for his innovative concepts regarding the arrangement of houses, became a prominent Nazi architect and artist. Schultze-Naumburg convinced Hitler to reject modern architecture and to adapt classical and medieval designs.

Tragically, while waiting to receive a visa to the United States, Alexander Levy was sent to a French detention camp, and eventually, he was deported to Auschwitz in August of 1942. On the way to the death camp Levy wrote his last postcard to Nadja Strasser:

> My dear, the more we approach the realities, the less they are frightening. I am in the train and tolerant the ride well. Our friends promised me to take care of you. Everything is the best in the best of these worlds, and I hope to see you soon. I will write no more before Christmas. I congratulate you on your birthday on September 25th. (Meyer-Maril, 1994).

Levy perished in Auschwitz in the same year before the arrival of Christmas (Meyer-Maril, 1994).

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Phyllis Lassner is an expert on gender, film and biographical representations in the Holocaust. Her important essay reveals how the Holocaust has been represented in filmic format.

Biographical Holocaust Films

Phyllis Lassner

Feature films, docudramas, and documentaries have become the most widely disseminated source of Holocaust history. This essay focuses on biographical films or Biopics, that is stories based on the experiences of actual individuals at the time, recorded in diaries during or after the war, as with memoirs, or compilations of autobiographical materials by others. The categories of biopics considered here are children, gender and sexuality, perpetrators, and resisters.

Introduction: Witness Testimony

Researched focused on the Holocaust was propelled by the discovery of massive numbers of detailed written records kept by the many departments and agencies of Nazi Germany's vast bureaucracy. Much of this documentation served as evidence against high-ranking Nazi officials at the thirteen Nuremberg trials

between 1945 and 1949. The prosecution of these trials and later ones also depended on other forms of evidence, such as oral interrogation of the plaintiffs. While necessary for judicial reasons, this focus on perpetrators offered only one side of the Holocaust. It was the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1960 that demonstrated the crucial perspective of victims and the oral testimonies of survivors to learn how the Holocaust was experienced by those who were targeted for extermination by Nazi Germany. Despite the lapses and traumas that would affect survivors' memories, their individual testimonies have served many purposes, including legal decisions, ethical judgments, and historical knowledge regarding perpetrators, the conditions of the camps, forms of punishment, methods of extermination, and a wide variety of resistance and attempts to escape. Individual testimony has also illuminated the observations, experiences and responses of victims, survivors, bystanders, and onlookers in the countless sites of the Nazi genocide, including the ghettoes, concentration and slave labor camps, killing centers, hiding places, on the run, and escape and rescue efforts.

Written Survivor Accounts

In addition to these oral testimonies, written accounts, mostly by survivors, have become object of intense historical and literary study and a rewarding source for teaching. Written testimony includes memoirs, such as Elie Wiesel's *Night* and Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz,* diaries, such as Anne Frank's, and court and transcripts of trials and interviews. It is important to note that our access to written survivor testimony depends on translation from the witnesses' native languages, including German, Czech, Polish, Russian, Italian, and Yiddish. However, even considering inexact word choices, grammar, and written emphases, these sources remain crucial. Even when written testimony consists only of rescued pieces of paper, as in the Oneg Shabbos Project,[51] being able to read these personal recollections means that we can closely examine the many strands of their

[51] The project was organized by Emanuel Ringelblum, a Polish Jewish journalist, who asked people throughout the Warsaw Ghetto to record their observations and experiences as a historical record. The story is recounted by Samuel Kassow.

meaning, including their emotional and behavioral responses and intended effects on readers and the historical record. Helpfully, when written testimony is published, it is most often accompanied by introductions to their historical, geographical, political, and experiential contexts, and by explanatory footnotes, glossaries of technical terms, maps, and on occasion, photographs.

Film

The medium that has been responsible for the most widespread dissemination of Holocaust experience is film. In 1978, the enormous popularity of the four-part television miniseries *Holocaust* launched widespread interest in the Nazi genocide.[52] Although the series was fictional and contained historical inaccuracies, it succeeded in depicting innocent people of all ages being brutally rounded up on November 9, 1938 in the pogrom called *Kristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass), and being transported in stifling cattle cars to ghettoes, concentration camps,

[52] An estimated 15 million households or 20 million people viewed the series, including about 50% of West German adults.

and killing centers. This was a history that for most Americans had been unknown and for audiences elsewhere, had been ignored, neglected, or unacknowledged.

Following the success of *Holocaust,* the number of films dealing with Holocaust experiences proliferated both in the United States and Europe. The vast European terrain on which the Holocaust was perpetrated, the Nazis' myriad forms of persecution and murder, and various kinds of resistance, escape attempts, and survival have been translated into feature films, docudramas, and documentaries. The most popular of these films, including Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993), Roberto Benigni's *Life is Beautiful* (1998), Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* (2002), and Edward Zwick's *Defiance* (2008), have drawn large audiences but have also been criticized by scholars and teachers for the very reasons that make them popular, including suspenseful and successful stories of heroic rescue, the will to survive against all odds, risky and adventurous escapes, and romance. In response to these features, many scholars and teachers argue that such sentimental and sensational distortions of the complex characters

of victims, their relationships or successful attempts to survive lead to misunderstanding the Holocaust. In addition to misrepresenting a vast and complicated history, the most damaging effect of such exceptional stories is to give support to Holocaust deniers who claim that there were far fewer than six million deaths and that most were caused by disease, not Nazi perpetration.[53] Therefore, Holocaust scholars and educators maintain that it is crucial for films to represent the Holocaust with historical accuracy. Holocaust film expert Laurence Baron argues that the value of Holocaust films is that they

> figuratively or literally evoke a sense of the collective and individual choices and historical circumstances that enabled Hitler to persecute or liquidate millions of civilians he designated as asocial, deviant, ideological, racial, or religious enemies. (2005, viii-ix)[54]

[53] See Deborah Lipstadt (1993).

[54] Baron (2005) is the major source for developing Holocaust film categories and explicating individual films within them. Other comprehensive sources

The Biopic and Its Sources

The primary and most prevalent source and form of Holocaust filmmaking has been the "biopic," that is stories based on the experiences of actual individuals at the time, recorded in diaries during or after the war, as with memoirs, or compilations of autobiographical materials by others. One of the first diaries to be adapted into a feature film was Anne Frank's, in the 1959 production directed by George Stevens. With the restoration and publication of Anne's original, uncensored diary, the 2001 two-part television mini-series adapted from Melissa Müller's book *Anne Frank: The Biography* (2014) offers Anne's candid self-reflections about her developing sexuality and tense relationships with her mother and other occupants of the Annex that her father Otto Frank edited out of the first published version.

Gender and Sexuality as Biopic Subjects

include Loshitsky (1997), Doneson (2001), Insdorf (2003), Bartov (2005), Hirsch (2004), Haggith (2005),

Some Holocaust films dramatize aspects of the Holocaust that had previously been neglected because the subject was assumed to be offensive or marginal or because their film style was considered less accessible for many viewers. For example, *Bent* (1997), directed by Sean Mathias, was the first feature film to dramatize the Nazi persecution of gays. In addition to being filmed in black and white and directed and acted in a stylized, non-realist form, it offered little action or heroism and ended on a bleak if deeply felt note. *Bent* drew a very small audience but in the intervening years, since the subject of gays has become more mainstream in all public media, the film has gained a wide audience.[55]

The 1999 German film, *Aimée and Jaguar*, directed by Max Färberböck was a landmark production for several reasons.

[55] The film was based on the 1979 play of the same name by Martin Sherman, who also wrote the screenplay. *Bent w*on the Best Feature Film award in the 1998 Torino International Gay & Lesbian Film Festival. The (1999) documentary *Paragraph 175* explains Nazi laws against gay men. For further study of gay men in the Third Reich, see Seifert (2003).

Set in wartime Berlin, in vividly dramatic color, the film dramatizes a love relationship between a German woman and a Jewish woman. Lilly Wust is a pure Aryan Nazi whose husband is serving in the German army; because she is the mother of four Aryan boys, she has been awarded the Reich's Mother's Cross. Felice Schragenheim is Jewish and a lesbian and therefore threatened twice over. Their relationship would have been forbidden on several grounds, including the charge of *rassenschande* (sexual relations between an Aryan and non-Aryan). The film was based on the book by the Austrian-Jewish writer Erica Fischer, whose sources include Felice's letters and poems, Lilly's letters and diary, as well as interviews with Lilly and friends of Felice's who survived. Felice did not survive incarceration in Bergen-Belsen. *Aimée and Jaguar* enhances our knowledge of the Holocaust by dramatizing one of its key

elements: women's gender roles and sexual relationships under the Third Reich.[56]

Filming the Perspective of Children in the Holocaust

The perspective of children during the Holocaust includes those targeted for murder, those who were complicit with the Germans, and those who understand how despite their innocence, they bear the responsibility of witnessing. All three groups are depicted by French director Louis Malle in his autobiographical films *Lacombe Lucien* (1974) and *Revoir les Enfants* (*Goodbye Children* 1987). Based on his recollections of attending a Catholic boarding school during the Nazi occupation of France, the film portrays his development from innocence to revelation as he is shown befriending a Jewish boy being sheltered by the priests, recognizing his friend's devotion to his Jewish identity, and witnessing his betrayal and capture. The film attests to the moral

[56] Studies of women in the Holocaust include Koonz (1987), Ofer and Weitzman (1998), Hedgepeth and Saidel (2010).

responsibility borne by all onlookers to Holocaust events, regardless of age or innocence.

The 2014 German-Polish-French film *Run Boy Run,* directed by Pepe Danquart, is adapted from the 2000 novel *Run, Boy, Run* by Uri Orlev and is based on the life of Yoram Fridman (Srulik in the film), who escaped from the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942 as German troops were rounding up its Jews. Beginning when the boy is eight years old, the film tracks his relentless efforts to stay alive throughout the rest of the war as he traipses across the Polish countryside, from farm to farm, from icy winters to blistering summers, encountering occasional kindness but more often, he was greeted with indifference or betrayal. Like the 1991 film *Europa Europa,* directed by Agnieszka Holland, *Run Boy Run* is narrated from a boy's perspective as he struggles not only to live, but to save his Jewish identity as his life is threatened because of it.[57]

[57] On this film and fiction about boys on the run during the Holocaust, see Lassner (2020).

Europa Europa is based on the 1989 autobiography of Solomon Perel (Solly and Solek in the film), a German Jewish boy who on the evening of his Bar Mitzvah, escapes the deadly pogrom of *Kristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass) on November 9, 1938. Like Srulik, Solly's attempts to conceal his Jewish identity are constantly threatened because a circumcised penis would prove not only their Jewish identity, but that they embody Jewish racial and sexual depravity. Narrated entirely from the boys' perspective, both films depict the boys' struggle to retain their Jewish identity, which each boy had promised his father before escaping. Although Solly is saved by his successful disguise as a Nazi hero, he reveals the agony of his dual identity when he tries to reconstruct his foreskin and then when he rides a trolley through the ghetto straining for a glimpse of his parents.

Srulik's dual identity is put to a conclusive test at the end of the war when a representative of the Jewish Agency, on a mission to locate surviving Jewish children, finds the boy living happily at the Polish farm that has sheltered him. The agent charges Srulik with the responsibility of acknowledging his Jewish identity and

returning to his place in the remaining Jewish community. When he is taken back to the village of his birth and peeks into the window of his father's shop, he recalls a Jewish lullaby that triggers his memory and desire for a Jewish life. Both films feature epilogues that show Solly and Srulik as elderly, but robustly asserting their Jewish identities as fulfilled in their children and grandchildren. Although these epilogues evoke a sense of sentimental nostalgia, they serve as reminders to Srulik and Solly and to audiences that these are moments of memorializing those who were lost.[58]

Perpetrators

The primary focus of film biopics depicting perpetrators has been their leader, Adolf Hitler. And yet, as Holocaust scholar Alvin H. Rosenfeld (1985) argues, "no representations of Hitler, highbrow or low, seem able adequately to present the man or satisfactorily to explain him" (xx). Despite this serious shortcoming, Holocaust film expert Lawrence Baron (2005)

[58] Śliwowska (1998) presents child survivors' testimonies.

demonstrates that "public interest in Hitler has not diminished" (68). Some of the films representing Hitler try to account for the background that motivated his animus against the Jews and other victim groups, such as *The Death of Adolf Hitler* (1972). *Our Hitler: A Film from Germany* (1978) uses an experimental technique to acknowledge that there is no single explanation for Hitler's character and cruel policies. As described by Baron (2005), *Our Hitler i*s

> an inventive pastiche of different actors articulating Hitler's opinions and puppets symbolizing the myriad of personas Germans project onto him: the common man, the military genius, the Wagnerian hero, the tragic prince. (71).

Resisters

Although wartime resistance is typically considered to be an armed struggle, as in the example of the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto uprising, given the Nazis' broad reach and countless forms of brutal oppression, resisters responded to their specific circumstances in many different ways. Examples include secretly observing the Jewish holidays, women's emotionally supportive

groups in the camps, keeping diaries to bear witness, escape attempts, and most famously, blowing up Crematorium four at Auschwitz.[59] All of the films discussed above illuminate how survival in the Holocaust involved psychological as well as physical endurance to resist being exterminated or to demonstrate their humanity in opposition to Nazi barbarism. Biopic films that illustrate various types of resistance include the following.

Out of the Ashes (2003), based on the memoir *I Was a Doctor in Auschwitz* (2018) tells the story of Gisella Perl, a Hungarian obstetrician who was deported to Auschwitz where Josef Mengele, the camp's sadistic doctor, forced her to assist him in his experiments. In secret, agonizing over the moral dilemma she faced, she helped over a thousand women by performing abortions and infanticide. She made her decision knowing that

[59] In Auschwitz-Birkenau, a group of *Sonderkommando*, those men forced to deceive prisoners into the gas chambers and who operated the ovens, enlisted the help of several teenage girl prisoners to gather gunpowder. On October 7, 1944, they succeeded in blowing up the one crematorium, but all were caught and executed. www.holocaustresearchproject.org/revolt/sonderevolt.html

otherwise, both mother and child would be murdered. Perl survived and immigrated to the United States but was accused of choosing to assist Mengele. She was ultimately acquitted and eventually made her home in Israel where she worked for many years at Shaare Zedek hospital in Jerusalem.

The White Rose (1981) directed by Michael Verhoeven, and *Sophie Scholl: The Final Days* (2005), directed by Marc Rothemund, dramatize the story of the student resistance group the White Rose. Dedicated to non-violence, the group was caught distributing their anti-Nazi leaflets at their university. Sophie and her brother were declared guilty of high treason and executed in February 1943. The film *Korczak* (1990), directed by Andrzej Wajda, details the selfless heroism of another active resister, Janusz Korczak, the Director of a Jewish children's orphanage who accompanied the children to their deaths in the Warsaw Ghetto. *Hanna's War* (1988), directed by Menachem Golan, is based in part on the diary of young Hungarian Jewish woman, Hanna Senesh. The film focuses on Hanna's tragic adventure of ignoring her orders to help fallen paratroopers behind German lines and

instead, fatefully attempting to rescue her mother in Budapest. Hanna was arrested, tortured, and killed by the Hungarian Fascist regime.[60]

Other films of resistance to the Third Reich include: *Wallenberg: A Hero's Story* (1985), profiles the Swedish diplomat who saved countless Hungarian Jews and who was arrested and probably killed by the Soviets at the end of the war. *Bonhoeffer: Agent of Grace* (2003), is the story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was a German Protestant theologian who helped Jews escape from Germany and took part in the plot to assassinate Hitler. He was ultimately captured and hanged by the Nazis.

One of the important contributions of biographical Holocaust films is that their representations of actual people individualize the otherwise overwhelming numbers of those who were deported, tortured, and killed for no other reason than to satisfy the hatred targeting their identities. Dramatizing the innocence of all Holocaust victims, these films offer a varied range

[60] For further discussion, see Lawrence Baron (1999).

of age groups, gender and sexual identities, national origins, and experiences. They also represent close-up, complex portraits that portray the humanity of people the Nazis sought to dehumanize.

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Next, Susan Eischeid's examination of the women's orchestra of Auschwitz-Birkenau continues the cultural analysis of the Holocaust, through the lens of gender. In this essay, Eischeid presents a short overview of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Women's Orchestra. Utilizing memoirs, interviews, and other archival resources and texts, we learn about the personnel, function, repertoire, leadership, and heroes of the orchestra, all within the greater context of the largest concentration and death camp of the Third Reich. The essay closes with the liquidation of the orchestra and ultimate fate of the musicians. A brief discussion about an ongoing controversy in remembrance is included, as are recent words of one of the last living survivors.

Courage, Resilience, and Artistry in the Land of Death: The Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz-Birkenau

Susan J. Eischeid

In many ways, music was an essential part of the Hitler's regime. Music was used for propaganda, for glorification, for discipline, and for entertainment. It was also abused in profane ways including the exploitation of musicians and composers for

Nazi self-aggrandizement, the facilitation of hard labor details, and for lulling victims into a false sense of security before murder in the gas chambers.

As Hitler's implementation of The Final Solution progressed, music and musical activity were evident in all stages of the Holocaust. Many of the ghettos and camps of the Third Reich had performing groups, composers wrote songs and other music expressing the circumstances in which they found themselves, and music was integrated into daily routines of discipline and death by Nazi officials.

All of these things provided a means of survival for musicians and, in some cases, spiritual hope. However, after the war others were tortured with thoughts of guilt, dismay, and sorrow. The use of music at a place like Auschwitz was, for many, an abomination.[61]

There were varied musical activities in the Auschwitz complex in southwestern Poland, including men's orchestras in

[61] Szymon Laks, *Music of Another World* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 5. See also Zofia Cykowiak, (interviews with Susan Eischeid, June 3, 2003 & May 15 2004, Krakow, Poland).

Auschwitz I, Auschwitz II Birkenau, and Auschwitz III Monowitz. Auschwitz-Birkenau was also home to the only women's orchestra in the Nazi camp system.

The women's orchestra at Auschwitz-Birkenau was formed in the spring of 1943 by two high-ranking Nazi officials; SS Hauptsturmführer Franz Hössler and Oberaufseherin (Head Overseer) of the women's camp, Maria Mandl. Both were cognizant of the successful men's orchestras and believed the formation of a unique women's orchestra would bring them added status and respect.[62]

After receiving permission to move ahead, recruitment began among the prison population. By early summer a nucleus of 20 musicians had been formed and a conductor named Zofia Czajkowska appointed. Over the next several months performers were added as the orchestra increased in size and status. At its

[62] Zofia Cykowiak, "Zarys historii kobiecej orkiestry w Oświęcimiu-Brzezinka" (An Outline History of the Women's Orchestra in Oświęcim-Brzezinka), Krakow, 1985, nr rejestracyjny 44527, Państwowe Muzuem Auschwitz-Birkenau w Oświęcimiu (APMO). Archival Material. See also Helena Dunicz Niwińska,(interview with Susan Eischeid, Krakow, Poland, June 10, 2003).

height, in 1944, the orchestra comprised approximately 45 musicians and several copyists.[63]

Due to the huge influx of transports into the camp, instruments were readily accessible. At first, the orchestra struggled. Most of the musicians were young and inexperienced, many teenagers. Although Czajkowska had provided a starting point, she was not a particularly inspired artist and initial concerts were not of high quality.[64]

The struggles of playing under the appalling conditions and stresses of the death camp and daily seeing arriving transports and mass murder on a heretofore inconceivable scale, made the production of beautiful music almost impossible for the young musicians. To add to the stress, everyone knew that if the level of performance did not improve, all could be re-assigned to hard labor or to death.

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[63] Helena Dunicz Niwińska, *One of the Girls in the Band* (Oświęcim, Poland: Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2014), 171-176.

[64] Eischeid, Susan. 2016. *The Truth about Fania Fénelon and the Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz-Birkenau*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 7.

The savior of the orchestra arrived in the person of a woman named Alma Rosé. Rosé was an established artist, conductor and virtuoso violinist who had been deported into the Auschwitz I camp. She came from a prominent family of musicians – her father was the respected violinist Arnold Rosé and her uncle, the esteemed composer Gustav Mahler. Mandl was notified of Alma's presence and arranged to have her transferred to Birkenau to conduct the struggling women's orchestra.

In a herculean effort and utilizing all of the talent and strength of spirit she possessed, Alma created a viable orchestra. Molding and teaching the musicians, many of whom had little if any previous training, and strictly regulating rehearsals, she rose above the conditions of the death camp and began to present concerts of high quality.

The orchestration of the orchestra was unusual, consisting of strings, guitar, flute, recorder, a few singers, percussion, cello, double bass, mandolin, and accordion. Alma arranged standard orchestral repertoire for the resources they had. Germanic composers like Mozart, Schumann and Schubert were performed

as well as more popular selections, German marches, and military songs.[65]

Although the musicians struggled with the omnipresent hunger in the camp, they were also permitted a barracks of their own which was heated for rehearsals and provided a separate living area in the back. Conditions were primitive but infinitely better than those of the prison population at large. Some of this was due to the SS, who did not want to come in close contact with louse ridden individuals at concerts so permitted the musicians to keep clean. Despite this, many of the women did suffer with maladies common to the camp such as typhus, bacterial infections, and scabies.[66]

The young performers endured long rehearsals, often extending all day, and presented weekly concerts in both the camp hospital and in and outside of the Sauna building. Another of their major responsibilities was to play at the entrance of the camp while

[65] Helena Dunicz Niwińska, "Truth and Fantasy," *Pro Memoria* Nr. 3-4 (Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau, 1996), 65.

[66] Cykowiak, An Outline History, APMO.

slave labor details were marched out in the morning and back again at night.

Sadly, Alma Rosé, the guiding light of the orchestra, did not survive the war. On April 5, 1944, she died under suspicious circumstances, most probably from botulism.[67] After her death the orchestra floundered and ultimately was dispersed as the camp was liquidated. The musicians were deported to various other camps including Bergen-Belsen, Ravensbrück and Neustadt-Glewe. Although a few of the women died, most survived the war - largely due to their position in the women's orchestra and the efforts of Alma Rosé.

In the years following liberation survivors of the orchestra struggled to build new lives after the devastation of the Holocaust. Few spoke of their experiences in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Then, in 1976, a singer named Fania Fénelon published her memoir of the orchestra. Titled "Sursis pour l'orchestre" (Reprieve for the Orchestra) it was shortly thereafter released in English, first as

[67] Richard Newman, and Karen Kirtley. 2000. *Alma Rosé: Vienna to Auschwitz*. Portland: Amadeus Press. 305-306.

"The Musicians of Auschwitz," and finally as "Playing for Time."[68]

Written in a popular and often salacious style, the book was an immediate success. Quickly translated into multiple languages it sold hundreds of thousands of copies all over the world. In 1980 *Playing for Time* was made into a television movie which aired on CBS to great acclaim and occasional controversy and continues to stream on Netflix today.

Playing for Time was viewed with horror by other survivors of the orchestra, who were appalled by Fénelon's memoir and her often embellished and manufactured prose. Most egregiously they were upset by Fénelon's inaccurate portrayal of Alma Rosé, the inflation of her own importance and role in the orchestra, and the mean-spirited and devastating portrayal of her former friends. From its inception the other women banded together and fought to draw attention to the problems and

[68] Fania Fénelon, *Sursis pour l'orchestre*, (Paris: Stock Publishers, 1976). Fania Fénelon, *The Musicians of Auschwitz*, first English edition, (London: Billing and Sons Ltd., 1977). Fania Fénelon, *Playing for Time*, (New York: Berkley Books, 1977).

mischaracterizations in the memoir. Their concerns were mostly dismissed or ignored and, decades later, *Playing for Time* is still often accepted as the truth of the orchestra.[69]

Thankfully, several of the other women subsequently wrote their own memoirs or consented to personal interviews, and from these we can draw a better and more honest picture of the orchestra.[70] One survivor, Fanny Korenblum Birkenwald, stressed throughout her life that "We had remained human beings and for someone who has lived a life in the camps, it is a great thing to have retained one's dignity. I feel proud to have been part of the orchestra." (F. Korenblum Birkenwald & A. Lasker-Wallfisch, personal communication, 2014)

In 2018 one of the last surviving musicians, Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, was invited to speak at the Bundestag when the German

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[69] Susan Eischeid. 2016. *The Truth about Fania Fénelon and the Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz-Birkenau.* London: Palgrave Macmillan. 3.

[70] Anita Lasker-Wallfisch. 1996. *Inherit the Truth*. New York: St. Martin's Press. See also Niwińska, Helena Dunicz. 2014. *One of the Girls in the Band*. Oświęcim: Auschwitz Birkenau State Museum. See also Olewski, Rachela Zelmanowicz. 2009. *Crying is Forbidden Here!* Tel-Aviv: Olewski Family. See also Daëron, Michael. 2000. *Bach in Auschwitz* (Film Documentary). New York: Winstar TV and Video.

Parliament commemorated the Holocaust shortly after the 73rd anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

> Sometimes, I think that the orchestra in Auschwitz was a kind of microcosm, a society in miniature that we can learn from. Many years after these events, I am in close contact with one of these other prisoners, a Polish woman, a pure Aryan who played the violin in the orchestra… We still have problems finding a common language, but we talk and write to each other in English. In short, we have become friends and have found that we have far more in common than that which divides us. Perhaps this can serve as an example for today's problems. Talk to each other. Build bridges. (Lasker-Wallfisch, 2018)

Recommended Resources if you would like to learn more about the Auschwitz-Birkenau Women's Orchestra or Music in the Holocaust:

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Women's Orchestra in Oświęcim-Brzezinka), nr rejestracyjny 44527, Państwowe Muzuem Auschwitz-Birkenau w Oświęcimiu (APMO). Archival Material.

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Chapter Nine: The Holocaust and Philosophy

Philosophy is critical to any study of the Holocaust, but how can we explain the unexplainable? We can look to philosophy to understand how faith was challenged, denied, reformed, disregarded, and preserved - during a time of total genocide. Philosophical narratives provide a discussion on how to try to reach an impossible understanding as to why the Holocaust occurred. Here, we have an opportunity to scaffold a fascinating philosophical examination of the implications of the Holocaust. Scholar and Oakton professor Peter Hudis provides a critical look at one of the 20th century's most influential Jewish philosophers, Emmanuel Levinas.

Emmanuel Levinas

Peter Hudis

Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995), a widely influential Jewish philosopher, was born in 1906 in Kaunas, Lithuania. He immigrated to France in 1923, took up the study of philosophy, and became influenced by Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology. In 1929, when barely 24 years old, he published

the first book-length study of Husserl in French. He also became enthralled with the work of Martin Heidegger, whose pathbreaking work *Being and Time* sent shockwaves through European philosophy. The gravest shock, however, was when Heidegger joined the Nazi party in 1933, openly promoted Nazism, and subjected many of his Jewish colleagues (including Husserl himself) to persecution. The shock hardly lessened by 1940, when Levinas (now a French citizen and military officer) was captured and imprisoned in a forced labor camp for Jewish prisoners. Though he avoided deportation to Germany, that was not the case with his parents and brothers, who perished in the Shoah—an event that evoked not a word of criticism or remorse on the part of Heidegger from then to the end of his life.

Levinas's response to the Holocaust largely defines the terrain of his subsequent thought. But he did so in a particular way, by arguing (often in direct contrast to Heidegger's phenomenological ontology) that "philosophy cannot not be an ethics" (Levinas, 1999, p. 97). Throughout his evolving body of work, Levinas argued against the tendency to reduce the Other to a

reflection of an absorbing or constituting consciousness by first of all distinguishing between two concepts of truth.

Much of Western thought has treated truth as the identity between phenomena and a comprehending consciousness that reduces "the Same to all that is opposed to it as Other" (Levinas, 1993, p. 91). Truth is viewed in terms of the conquest or consumption of exteriority and otherness in the name of "freedom" and "autonomy." The distinctiveness of the Other, its heteronomy, gets flattened out and neutralized in the pursuit of apodictic self-certainty. In contrast, Levinas argues, "in the truth, a thinker maintains a relationship with a reality distinct from him, other than him—'absolutely other'" (Levinas, 1993, pp. 88-89). A journey of discovery that returns us to the point from where we began after having absorbed the world into itself—the motif that haunts Western consciousness from Homer's *Odyssey* to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Sprit*—allows for no irreducible gap between the self and the Other.

The problem with such standpoints is that they remove the ground for ethical obligation. If all that is separate from me can

eventually be reintegrated into myself in a higher totality, wherein lies the *compulsion* to respond to the obligations posed by others who overflow my ideas and even my life? Wherein lies the compulsion to take responsibility for those outside my circle of friends, family, religion and nationality? People are rarely diffident about addressing the needs of those like themselves; but what about those who are not, who are *absolutely* other? Is not the Holocaust the ultimate expression of the refusal to posit a particularism free from all that interferes with its universalism? To live a truly ethical life we must put aside the temptation to treat every obstacle as something to be surmounted and eventually integrated into our orbit of experience. This poses a sharp challenge to prevailing notions of freedom and autonomy, but it does not entail a rejection of the idea of freedom itself.

Freedom is not possible without some kind of separation, without a tear or a rupture in the fabric of the totality. In lieu of such a separation it is hardly possible to contemplate and *engage* the marvel of lived life. Levinas suggests that Western thought grows impatient with the very separation that gives rise to it and

seeks to reintegrate the separate elements into a higher synthesis. By reducing otherness to what can be absorbed and appropriated by a comprehending consciousness, much of Western thought leaves us without access to that which inevitably escapes our grasp—that which is "infinite," the Other. And what escapes our grasp in thought is often forcefully annulled in life, as the history of colonialism, imperialism, racism, and their accompanying genocides suggest.

Levinas's challenge to the egology that characterizes modernity involves recovering "the heteronomous relationship with an unknown God" (Levinas, 1993, p. 96). God is not "known." God *reveals*. God in the Judaic tradition is *unknown*. The gravest crimes are justified in the name of a *known* God. The infinite, the idea of God, escapes any effort at self-appropriation. But that does not mean the infinite exerts no determinant pull on the life of humanity, as is shown by the persistence of the idea of an infinite, unknowable God in human history. The fact that the idea of an infinite being cannot be made transparent to the knowing self does not render it superfluous. Levinas is not simply,

or even primarily, providing the basis of a religious exegesis: his point is that the other *person* can no more be reduced to a moment of our self-awareness than can the idea of God. The Other confronts us from across a divide that is not exhausted by our efforts to define or appropriate her. The Other is in this sense "infinite." The Other comes to us from "on high," as a gift or as a threat, but never as a result of our grasping and self-awareness. The Other maintains itself in distinction from our subjectivity; she is *irreducible*, and in this sense, *divine*.

Levinas develops these insights through a decades-long engagement with René Descartes's *Mediations on First Philosophy*, which he considered among the five most important works in the history of philosophy. This may be counter-intuitive: is not Descartes' introspective *meditation* on the self as the ground for veridical knowledge the very opposite the "I-Thou" relation that Levinas and Martin Buber take as their point of departure? It is important to recall, however, that Descartes's discourse on the self as a "thinking thing" raises the question of how a finite being can have thought of the *infinite*. The latter is not constituted by the

knowing subject; it is *a priori*. From where does this innate idea derive? Not from the knowing self, but from that which is itself infinite. Descartes identifies the latter with God, whereas Levinas identifies it with the relation between the self and the interminable obligations posed by the presence of the other *person*. It is not without reason that Levinas objected to defining his work in religious terms, even though the terms of religious (and especially Judaic) discourse frames much of his thinking.

The *cogito* necessarily maintains a relationship with the *infinite*. But what is the nature of this relationship? The infinite overflows any effort to comprehend it, seize it, conceptualize it. It does not *derive* from our freedom of thought. How then can we know what is finite, and hence imperfect, unless there is an infinite power that "comes to humanity"? *This infinite power is the face of the other*. Herein lies the great intellectual revolution inaugurated by Levinas: the most mundane phenomenon of everyday life—the presence of a face, the most exposed and vulnerable part of the body—is not only the source of our consciousness of others but of

the discovery that our obligation to them is *inexhaustible*. There is simply no excuse not to save the lives of the damned:

> When we look at the face of the Other we know that we are commanded to honor the alterity of the other by recognizing an asymmetry between us. We also know that something has "happened" in the intersubjective "space" between us which transcends any knowledge we may have of it. But far from gaining an objective knowledge of God's purpose, we feel a deepened sense of responsibility, the weight of the other's suffering, an enhanced sense of the other's creatureliness. We do not interpret what we feel as belonging to a teleological nexus but as bearing a moral imperative. (Wyschogrod, 2005, p. 362)

Levinas's "philosophy of the face" does not immediately translate into political action, although it has influenced numerous political theorists, including Frantz Fanon and Enrique Dussel. But it did lead Levinas to conclude that Heidegger, his initial philosophic mentor, "*in the end* does not escape from the totalitarian and egological tendencies of the Western tradition"

(Peperzak, 1993, p. 16). It was not alone the Shoah—and Heidegger's silence about it—that led Levinas to embark on a new path in thought. He wrote, "The circumstances of Marxism having turned into Stalinism is the greatest offense to the cause of the human, because Marxism bore the hopes of humanity: it may be the one of the greatest psychological shocks for the twentieth-century European" (Levinas, 1999, p. 107). It is a shock humanity is still trying to recover from.

Levinas did not despair of humanity, nor did he proclaim "the end of man"—unlike many of his later interlocutors in French philosophy. He stated, "But in the decay of human relations, in that sociological misery, goodness persists. In the relation of one person to another person, goodness is possible…it is a goodness beyond all systems, all religions, all social organizations. Gratuitous, that goodness is eternal (Levinas, 1999, pp. 107-9). And as he argued in *Totality and Infinity*, his greatest philosophic work, "Freedom consists in knowing that freedom is in peril" (Levinas, 1969, p. 35). Human freedom has perhaps never been

more in peril than it is today, which makes the thought of Levinas of such enduring value.

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York. Routledge.

Chapter Ten: Resistance and Upstanders

Heroes of the Holocaust: Resistance and Upstanders

Wendy Adele-Marie

Heroes often do not have names. Some heroes have names but are unknown because they did not want fame or glory. Some heroes become known because they people they helped save make sure that they are known. People fought back against the Nazis in any way that they could. Resistance took on many forms, including armed resistance. Non-Jews also aided in resistance. Ordinary people within Germany resisted, from plotting assassination attempts to hiding children. An excellent place to start with understanding armed resistance in the ghettos and camps comes from this reading from Echoes & Reflections: Armed Resistance in Ghettos and Camps; see also Rescuers and Non-Jewish Resistance.

Motivations for becoming involved in helping Jews varied. Why would people risk their lives to help? In his essay, survivor Ralph Rehbock cited several people, some total strangers, who helped his family survive. Upstanders were the opposite of bystanders. They acted. They resisted, they saved lives. They got

involved. Upstanders rescued Jews, made up false papers to help Jews escape, and acted because they had to. Irena Sendler, a member of the Polish Underground Resistance, saved 2,500 children. In Hungary, Charles Lutz, the Swiss Vice-Consul, saved over 60,000 Jews by providing safe places to hide and papers of safe conduct. The Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara and his wife saved thousands of Lithuanian Jews, issuing them visas. Many Muslims during the Holocaust, at great risk and peril to themselves, their family, friends, and any known associates, saved lives. The website, *Holocaust: A Call to Conscience*, reveals in the essay "The Holocaust and Muslims" that in Europe,

> there were also stories of great courage and sacrifice on the part of Muslims who risked their own lives to save the Jews from the Nazis. Muslim Albania was the only country in Europe in which there were more Jews after the war than there had been before the war. Before World War II, there were only 200 Jews in Albania, which had a total population of 800,000. After the war, there were many more Jews after Jewish refugees from some half dozen

> European countries fled the Nazi persecution and sought shelter in Albania. These Muslim heroes included the Bosnian Dervis Korkut, who harbored a young Jewish woman resistance fighter named Mira Papo and saved the Sarajevo Haggadah, one of the most valuable Hebrew manuscripts in the world; the Turk Selahattin Ulkumen, whose rescue of fifty Jews from the ovens of Auschwitz led to the death of his wife Mihrinissa soon after she gave birth to their son Mehmet when the Nazis retaliated for his heroism; and the Albanian Refik Vesili who - at the age of 16 - saved eight Jews by hiding them in his family's mountain home. (Holocaust: a call to conscience, 2009)

One of the most famous Muslim upstanders was Iranian diplomat Abdol Hossein Sardari, who rescued thousands of Jews from France's occupied zone. There were also Jewish rescue networks who saved other Jews, as related in the new book *Heroines of Vichy France: Rescuing French Jews During the Holocaust* by Paul R. Bartrop and Samantha J. Lakin. Upstanders stood up and acted, at great peril to themselves, to do the right thing.

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The powerful story of upstander Janusz Korczak is presented here by Adam Yunis. It was a speech written by Adam Yunis and presented to the Polish American Medical Society by Kelley Szany, Vice President of Education and Exhibitions IMHEC, in October 2019.

The Life of Janusz Korczak

Adam Yunis

Janusz Korczak represents all the creativity, talent, empathy and ambition to make the world a better place that was lost in the tragedy of the Holocaust. But Korczak also represents courage, the courage to put others before yourself, the courage to not abandon your beliefs, your friends, your children. Writing in the Warsaw Ghetto, Korczak writes of staking his life on a single card, the care of destitute children. Korczak is known for his actions during this time in the Ghetto, where he heroically cared for the children in his orphanage, but his actions throughout his life display a profound sense of moral duty to help not only individuals, but society. What strikes us most from Kozak's life is

an intense belief in humanity and his message that we cannot let our world, our society, fail our children.

Janusz Korczak was born Henryk Goldszmit on July 22nd, 1878 or 1879 to a well off, assimilated Jewish family in Warsaw, Poland. Korczak writings tell us of his own shock on learning as a five-year-old that he was a Jew from a janitor's son, who threatened him with a dark place much like Hell if he did not do his bidding. We do not know if his father, Józef, a lawyer, took him to synagogue or had him bar mitzvahed, but he passed on to him the aspirations of his own father, a physician, to liberate the Jews from their segregated lives and propel them into Polish culture. This belief in a strong bond between Jews and Poles, that one could be both Jewish and Polish and not sacrifice either identity would be a driving force in his life. Korczak states in his memoir "I pursue in life that which my father strove for and for which my grandfather tortured himself for many years. "This belief in one common humanity would be a defining principle in his work as an educator.

When Korczak father died after a long illness in 1896, the family was left without a source of income. Korczak was forced to be the sole breadwinner for his mother, sister, and grandmother. Children became Korczak savior in his youth, just as he would become theirs. He forgot his own anxieties while tutoring pampered, rich boys, much like he had been, in order to help support his family, and in the process developed some of the creative strategies that he would later use in his own orphanages. This close family environment and the death of his father by illness undoubtedly influenced his awareness to the plight of societal problems and his early pursuit of medicine. Korczak studied medicine at the University of Warsaw from 1898-1904. During this time, he began writing professionally, using the name we now know today, Janusz Korczak, a name he chose from one of his favorite Polish novels. Korczak was immediately successful, writing in several newspapers and publishing well received children's books. In medicine he specialized in pediatrics but immediately after graduating was drafted into the Russian army and was posted in East Asia. Even during those war years, Korczak

was always himself, always sensitive to the fate of children. In his memoirs he recalls buying a beating rod off a sadistic Chinese teacher in one of the villages – it would later serve as a skipping rope for children at his Orphans' Home. He then worked for Bersohns and Baumans Children's Hospital in Warsaw from 1905-1912. During this time, he continued to write children's books and books for adults on raising their children and became well known in Warsaw society for his successful private practice in medicine and as an influential author.

Both as a doctor and a writer, Korczak was drawn to the world of the child. He worked in a Jewish children's hospital and took groups of children to summer camps, and in 1908 he began to work with orphans. By working with orphans, he met Stefania Wilczynska, a superb educator, and the daughter of a wealthy Jewish family who dedicated her life to the care of orphans and greatly influenced Korczak and his career as an educator. It was the work with orphans and with the help of a great mind as Stefania that led him to open his own orphanage, one where he could implement his own progressive ideas.

In 1912, Korczak and Stefania opened *Dom Sierot* at Krochmalna 92 street, a Jewish orphanage with a hundred boys and girls, ages seven to fourteen. Members of Warsaw society had been amazed that the famous Janusz Korczak would give up his literary career and successful medical practice to take care of poor children. They did not understand that medicine was no longer enough for this visionary pediatrician. “The road I have chosen toward my goal is neither the shortest nor the most convenient,” he told an interviewer. “But it is the best for me because it is my own. I found it not without effort or pain.” Part of the difficulty in making the decision lay in assuring himself that he was not betraying medicine. He reasoned that medicine is involved only with curing the sick child, but he had a chance to cure the whole child in running an orphanage. As a scientist he could use the orphanage as a laboratory for clinical observation and as an educator, he could be, in his own words, “sculptor of the child’s soul.” The children’s republic he built was designed as a just community where its young citizens would have their own parliament, newspaper, and court of peers.

Korczak was a pioneer in what we now call moral education. Central to his ideas in his orphanage and in his ideas of childhood development was his Declaration of Children's Rights. That children have a right to be loved, respected and given optimal conditions in which to grow. They have a right to be taken seriously and that children are not people of tomorrow but people of today. Korczak believed that "the unknown person inside each child is the hope for the future." It was for this reason children could be as religious as they wanted and allowed to pursue creative outlets as they wish.

As a form of tonic, Pan Doctor, as the orphans called him, devised ingenious strategies — his "pedagogical arsenal" — to help his charges strengthen their will. One favorite was the make-believe gambling casino he set up for them to bet on how many fights they would have each week, until they were motivated to have none. However, he considered the children's court of peers the cornerstone of his system because it would show the children that there could be justice even in an unjust world. Rather than retaliating a child could call out "I sue you," and sign his or her

name on the list of court cases that were heard each Saturday morning. Five children with no cases against them that week were the judges, who followed a Code of Laws that Korczak had drawn up, with forgiveness being the usual resolution to a court case. Behind Korczak creative techniques was a keen psychological understanding of children that came from years of practice, experience that most doctors who worked with adults did not have. Korczak once told a friend "I am a doctor by training, a pedagogue by chance, a writer by passion, and a psychologist by necessity."

Korczak was also striving to fulfill the goals of his father and grandfather and to reinforce the bridge between Jewish and Catholics. He made Polish the language in his Jewish orphanage, co-directed a second orphanage in Warsaw for poor Catholic children and wrote humorous books on his experiences in both Jewish and Polish summer camps. He learned at camp that all children are alike because they speak the common language of childhood. They laugh at the same things; they feel the same weight of life and they weep at the same things. As Korczak influence grew he founded the first children's newspaper, The

Little Review, and had a radio program as the Old Doctor, whose warmth and wit endeared him to Polish children all over the country. The Little Review was press phenomenon of an unprecedented scale – a paper edited and written by children, which maintained the appearance of a real paper and which was devoid of any paternalistic and moralizing approach typical of publications addressed to children. His last radio broadcast took place in 1939 during the start of the war, when he addressed children to soothe them and prepare them for what was coming.

On September 1st, 1939, Germany invaded Poland after having staged several false flag border incidents as a pretext to initiate the attack. Korczak volunteered for military service but was refused due to his age. Shortly after Warsaw fell to the Germans in 1939, Korczak began a memoir, starting with the line, "Reminiscences make a sad, depressing literature." Certainly, he did not expect at the age of sixty-one to be writing a memoir in occupied Warsaw, in what he called "the hour of reckoning in the saddest hospital in the world."

In early November 1940, one year after the creation of the ghetto, together with Ms. Stefa and his children, Korczak was forced to leave Krochmalna (which now found itself outside of the ghetto) and to transfer into a building of the State Trade School on 33 Chłodna Street. As part of his resistance to the Nazis, Korczak kept the same structure and routine in his ghetto orphanage. Every Saturday morning, the children were weighed, the court or peers met and handed down its verdicts, and he read aloud the orphanage newspaper. He added an underground school in the orphanage, which included Hebrew in the curriculum to prepare those children if there was an opportunity to escape to Palestine. Korczak struggled to keep his spirits up. This educator who could not bear to see a child suffer from any injustice or an unkind word, who had a taken a vow to uphold the cause of children and to defend their rights, had to pass dead or dying children on the street every day. He records without comment that three boy boys playing on the sidewalk were annoyed that the body of a dead child was in their way. Korczak unsuccessfully pleaded with the *Judenrat* to provide

a place where terminally ill children could die with dignity. In the Ghetto, Korczak refused to wear an armband with a star of David. He felt this demeaned the Jewish star to be used in such a way, but this resistance almost cost him his life. During the move to the Ghetto, in 1940, Korczak protested to the Gestapo that these orphanages potatoes had been confiscated during the move. He was thrown into the notorious Pawiak prison for not wearing his armband. He survived only because of one of his former orphans had the contacts and funds to get him out.

During his time in the ghetto, Korczak spent his days caring for his orphans and attempting to raise funds for food and medicine. When he was a child, Korczak father invited in unemployed workers who went from house to house performing a puppet play during Christmastime. After it was over an old man with a bag appeared to take up donations. The boy, “trembling with excitement,” would toss his little coins into the sack. The old man would peer inside, shake his long white beard, and say: “Very little, very little, young gentleman, a bit more.” The old man with the sack had taught Korczak a great deal: He writes in the ghetto

that “The hopelessness of defense against persistent requests and unbounded demands that are impossible to meet. At first, you give eagerly, then less enthusiastically, from a sense of duty, then, following the laws of inertia, from habit and without heart, and then resentfully, angrily, with despair.” Each morning in the ghetto he got up, slung a sack over his aching shoulder, and went out to makes his rounds of wealthy contacts and social service agencies to plead, then demand, money and food for his two hundred children. He was as relentless as the old man: no matter what they gave, it was never enough.

Korczak took a break from writing in his memoir until May of 1942, nearly a two-year break. We can surmise that he started writing again because of the increasing violence of Nazi death squads and rumors of impending mass deportations. For the first two weeks in July, when smugglers of food and supplies were being slaughtered, Korczak, the writer, emerges imagining a planet called Ro. The astronomer who lives on it, Professor Zi, can convert heat radiation into moral power and can bestow order and tranquility everywhere except on “that restless spark, Planet

Earth." Looking down on the wars of the planet, Professor Zi wonders if he should simply put an end to this senseless, bloody game. But with the compassion of the Old Doctor, he concludes: "Planet Earth is still young. And a beginning is painful labor." Professor Zi has all-encompassing power on Planet Ro, but Janusz Korczak has no control down in the smoldering ghetto, except in his children's republic. Still the inventive pedagogue, he makes a game out of catching the flies that swarm over the toilet buckets. He writes of the thrill he received when one of the boys asks: "May I pay the flies later? I can't wait," and another offers to catch his flies for him. "Community good will, what a mighty force," Korczak writes.

Rumors, impossible to verify, continued to spread through the ghetto that Jews were being gassed in other cities and that railroad cars were waiting to deport everyone from the Warsaw ghetto. Korczak Polish disciples on the Aryan side also heard the rumors, and sent Igor Newerly, his former secretary, into the ghetto disguised as a water and sewer inspector with a false identity card to bring Korczak out. According to Newerly, Korczak

refused to abandon the children at such a perilous time. He did, however, promise to send Newerly the diary he was working on for safekeeping.

In the ghetto Korczak attempted to keep kids occupied and thought that they might enjoy acting in a play The Post Office, written by the Indian writer and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore, whose empathy for children was much like his own. The production, which took place on July 18 — four days before deportations were announced and three weeks before the young actors would march to their deaths — has become legendary. In the play, Amal, a gentle and imaginative orphan adopted by a poor couple, is confined to his room with a serious illness, shut in from the outside world, like everyone in the ghetto, awaiting an uncertain future. He longs to fly to that land to which the King's doctor, greater than the one he has now, will lead him by the hand. The invited guests gasp along with Amal when the royal doctor suddenly appears and orders all the doors and windows to be opened. Amal's pain is gone, and he can see the stars twinkling on the other side of the darkness. Asked why he chose that play,

Korczak is reported to have said that he wanted to help the children face death without fear. But in his diary, he makes only a short notation about the afternoon: “Applause, handshakes, smiles, efforts at cordial conversation.”

July 22 was Korczak sixty-fourth birthday. It was also the day the Gestapo informed the ghetto that there would be deportations. By 4 PM that afternoon, six thousand people were to be at the *Umschlagplatz*, a large loading area just north of the ghetto, where freight trains were waiting to take them to “Resettlement in the East.” Korczak surely stood in the hysterical crowds looking at the notices posted on the ghetto walls, but rather than accept his inability to alter the surreal events of that day, he did battle where he could.

In the final entry of August 5 or August 6, Korczak is watering the “poor orphanage plants,” which had been smuggled into the ghetto by his Polish friends. He muses about the young German soldier standing with his rifle by the ghetto wall across the street. The soldier was not shooting at him, even though his “bald head in the window” would make a “splendid target.” Korczak

tries to see him as a young man with an identity other than a killer with a gun. “Perhaps he was a village teacher, a street sweeper in Leipzig, a waiter in Cologne.” He considers waving his hand in a friendly gesture. He writes what will be the final words of his ghetto diary: “Perhaps he doesn’t even know that things are as they are? He may have arrived only yesterday from far away...” We see that to his last day in the ghetto Korczak tries to hold on to his humanity.

On Thursday, August 6, 1942, he and the children were sitting down to their meager breakfast when they heard the dread call: “All Jews out.” We can be certain that Korczak tried to reassure the children as they lined up fearfully, clutching their little flasks of water, their few possessions, their diaries. No one had yet escaped from Treblinka to reveal the truth: they were not going East, but sixty miles northeast of Warsaw to immediate extermination in gas chambers. We know from survivors who watched from behind closed shutters, and from Gestapo records, that Korczak, hatless, in high military boots, holding two young children by the hand, was at the head of the orderly procession of

192 children and 10 staff members, including the loyal Stefa, who had also turned down offers to escape. They marched four abreast in the broiling heat, holding high the flag of King Matt, green on one side, with the blue Star of David set against a field of white on the other, escorted by soldiers, whips, and dogs. Wladyslaw Szpilman in his memoir, *The Pianist* says of the scene "He told the orphans they were going out into the country, so they ought to be cheerful. At last, they would be able to exchange the horrible suffocating city walls for meadows of flowers, streams where they could bathe, woods full of berries and mushrooms. He told them to wear their best clothes, and so they came out into the yard, two by two, nicely dressed and in a happy mood."

We learn from the memoir of Nahum Remba, a *Judenrat* [Jewish council] official who ran a small first aid station on the *Umschlagplatz*, that 4,000 orphans, with their caretakers, went on the transports with Korczak and the children that day. He tried to persuade Korczak to go with him to ask the Judenrat to intercede, but Korczak would not consider leaving the children even for a moment in this terrifying place. Remba states "I shall never forget

this scene as long as I live," Remba wrote. "This was no march to the trains, but rather a mute protest, with eyes full of contempt for this murderous regime." The Jewish police jumped to attention and saluted when they saw Korczak helping the children into the crowded freight cars. The Germans asked: "Who is that man?" The doors closed. There were no survivors.

Outside the ghetto a red-haired boy appeared at his door with a package for Igor Newerly. Newerly realized that Korczak had kept his promise to send him the diary. He took it immediately to Korczak Polish orphanage and helped the caretaker brick it up under the eaves. After the war, when Poland was part of the Soviet bloc, Newerly, who had survived two years in Auschwitz (where he thought he spotted the red-haired boy), was able to retrieve the diary from its hiding place.

Only one rock is engraved: "Janusz Korczak (Henryk Goldszmit) and the children." At Treblinka today. Over the years, the Korczak legend has gathered momentum in Europe as poets and playwrights continue to recreate his march with the children to the trains. Korczak societies have sprung up in many countries and

hold international conferences to spread his educational ideas and to advocate for the welfare of children. The Poles claim Korczak as a martyr, who would have been canonized if he had converted; the Israelis claim him as one of the Thirty-Six Just Men, whose pure souls make possible the world's salvation. UNESCO declared 1978-79 the Year of Janusz Korczak, to coincide with the Year of the Child and the centenary of his birth. In 1971, the Russians discovered a new asteroid and named it 2163 Korczak. Now the Old Doctor really does have a planet very much like Planet Ro from which to control the moral forces in the universe and to put into effect his Declaration of Children's Rights. Janusz Korczak often said life is a strange dream, I ask you today to remember him not for how he died, but for the values he lived his life.

Further Resources:

Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto: The Journal of Emmanuel Ringelblum

The Warsaw Ghetto : Memoirs of Janusz Korcza

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Here, former Oakton student Sarah Gawo informs us about resistance in the ghettos, specifically, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Even in the face of certain death, people fought back. Sarah reminds us that people were not willing victims.

Resistance: Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

Sarah Gawo

Jewish resistance against Nazi Germany occurred in a variety of ways ranging from minor to major offenses. Resistance ranged from actively using violence to using non-violent tactics. This essay will discuss the form of Jewish resistance undertaken in the Warsaw ghetto, as well as describing the various conditions of each type of ghetto.

The ghettos were used to separate the Jewish people from society. They were segregated because the Nazis believed that Jewish people were like vermin. Thus, the Nazis believed that they needed to contain the Jews in an enclosed space in order to not increase disease. Consequently, the Jewish residents of the ghettos were mistreated and discriminated against. The Nazis created three types of ghettos: destruction, closed, and open. Closed ghettos

were fenced with barbed wire similar to that of a concentration camp. Open ghettos restricted the Jews from freely leaving and entering. Lastly, destruction ghettos were heavily enforced with Nazi workers who would either kill or deport the Jews. Under these circumstances, Jewish resistance grew in response to all the terror that they have endured from the Nazis as well as its collaborators.

A notable example of Jewish resistance is the Uprising of the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943. Heinrich Himmler, one of the main architect of the Holocaust, ordered that the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto be rounded up, and then deported to the Treblinka death camp. When the Jewish Fighting Organization (ZOB) and other groups heard about this plan, they decided it was time for the Jewish to resist the deportation. Many Jews used smuggled weapons such as machine guns and grenades to attack the Nazis. There were approximately 800 Jewish fighters and double the amount of the German troops. The Jews were able to stop the Germans but not for long. “The rebellion led by the ZOB and ZZW was crushed, and most of the ghetto residents were either deported

to the death camps or killed in the fighting and subsequent razing of the ghetto by German troops" (Einwohner, 663). After the destruction of the ghetto, the Nazis demolished the Great Synagogue of Warsaw. Approximately 7,000 Jews died in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, and 50,000 Jews were sent to concentration camps and killing centers.

Understanding Jewish resistance, one must consider the conditions of the ghettos and the high-risk activism undertaken by the resistors in the Warsaw ghetto. Not only did the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising exemplify the Jewish people's strength of spirit, but it also set precedent for the varying Jewish communities to also get involved in high-risk action to resist the Nazis.

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One of the most well-known resistance movements of the Holocaust was the White Rose. Professor, historian and German scholar Stephani Richards-Wilson presents her work on the White Rose and their American connections, along with assessments and critical resources for further research.

The White Rose and Their American Connections

Stephani Richards-Wilson

The White Rose resistance group (*Die Weiße Rose* in German) was a circle of friends and classmates studying at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany during the Second World War. In 1942-1943, they composed six flyers and distributed thousands of copies calling for nonviolent resistance against Hitler and the National Socialists (Nazis). The group included adult mentors who provided spiritual, financial, or other types of support. One of their professors, Kurt Huber, joined their efforts and was arrested, tried, and executed in 1943 similar to five other core members. The story of the White Rose is well known in Germany, however, connections to the United States are lesser known. This essay explores those connections then and now.

The courageous story of the White Rose, the Nazi resistance circle consisting of mostly university students, is well known in Germany and much of the world. You can find many books and resources about the core members on the Internet. Today, many streets, schools, and events throughout Germany memorialize the core members and their professor, especially in February when they were arrested by the Gestapo in 1943. In 1942-1943, during the Second World War, the White Rose students produced six flyers and made thousands of copies in the cover of night and in secret. They called for nonviolent resistance against Hitler's dictatorship. They typed the original flyers on a Remington typewriter manufactured in New York.[71]

During that same month of February 1943, Hans Scholl, Alexander Schmorell, and Willi Graf ventured out into the city streets of Munich three late nights and early hours of the morning. They painted freedom (*Freiheit*) slogans in the form of graffiti on

[71] The core members who were executed by the Nazis included Hans Scholl (1918-1943) and his younger sister Sophie Scholl (1921-1943), Alexander Schmorell (1917-1943), Christoph Probst (1919-1943), Willi Graf (1918-1943) and Professor Kurt Huber (1893-1943).

city walls and buildings near the university where they were studying medicine (Graf, 2004, pp. 322-323).[72] In less than a year, five of the students and their professor, Kurt Huber, were tried and executed by the Nazis for high treason. Only one of the core members who was also arrested and jailed, Traute Lafrenz, survived the trial and war. After a year in various Gestapo prisons, she was liberated by the Americans.

The students first got to know each other by attending private literary evenings near Ludwig Maximillian University of Munich where they were enrolled. The White Rose circle began as a group of friends and classmates who shared similar interests, most notably in books and literature. They mostly read European literature, however, one of the members, Willi Graf, was particularly impressed with award-winning American novelist and playwright Thornton Wilder (1897-1975). Wilder was born in Madison, Wisconsin and served in the US Army Air Force

[72] They painted "Freedom," "Down with Hitler," and "Mass murderer Hitler." Graf, Scholl, and Schmorell were student soldiers and assigned to a student company affiliated with the German army.

Intelligence in the Second World War. Graf especially liked his novel *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (1927), which he read in the summer of 1942.[73]

The group that originally met to discuss books and eventually emerged as the White Rose was informally started by Traute Lafrenz, Hans Scholl, and Alexander Schmorell, all medical students at LMU (Waage, 2012, p. 256). They shared an interest in culture, music, books, theological and philosophical questions, as well as resistance to Hitler and the Nazis. Traute brought the third White Rose flyer to students in Hamburg in November 1942, thereby cultivating a White Rose branch among her former classmates (Waage, 2012, p. 171). Along with Sophie Scholl, she obtained paper and envelopes as well. When the Scholls were arrested, she tried to warn others and removed evidence. She was also arrested and stood trial April 19, 1943. She was in various Gestapo jails until liberated by American troops on April 16, 1945.

[73] In this fable, Wilder explores the meaning of the human condition and the connection between the individual and cosmic dimensions. Ironically, Graf himself was fictionalized in a historical novel called *All God's Children* published in 2013 by Wisconsin writer Anna Schmidt.

She came to the United States in 1947 and completed her medical studies in California. She married a fellow physician, became an American citizen, and had four children whom she raised in Evanston, Illinois.[74]

There were five White Rose trials in total with numerous defendants. After Hans Scholl was arrested in February 1943, he told the Gestapo that he arbitrarily picked the name, the White Rose, however Newborn (2006) suspects that might not have been the case. It's possible Scholl said that to protect a friend (p. 4.). Newborn believes he intentionally tried to mislead the interrogator and to protect Josef Söhngen, a bookseller who offered the White Rose students a safe place to meet and hid banned books in his shop. He had also allowed the group to hide the flyers and

[74] Traute ran a small medical practice and led the Esperanza School in Chicago from 1971 to 1992. The school provides special education for developmentally challenged children from the poorer sections of the city. She retired in 1994. In 2009, she was awarded the Herbert Weichmann medal from the Jewish Community in Hamburg, Germany. After retiring and as of 2021, she lives in South Carolina and goes by the name Traute Page, MD. She was awarded the *Bundesverdienstkreuz* (Federal Cross of Merit or Order of Merit), a prestigious honor in Germany, on May 3, 2019, her 100th birthday.

duplicating materials in his cellar (Weiße Rose Stiftung, 2006, p. 76).[75]

Die Weiße Rose (*The White Rose*), a novel by B. Traven, was originally published in 1929 in Germany. It was serialized in the last issues of the *Munich Post* newspaper which like the White Rose students, fought to expose the truth about Hitler and his sinister agenda (Rosenbaum, 2017). After the Nazis seized power in 1933 and took control of the media, they shut down the *Post* and banned Traven's novel. The story takes place in the 1920s, partly in the United States and partly in Mexico. An American oil company purchased the oil rights to the haciendas encircling the *Rosa Blanca* or White Rose. The plot revolves around the evils of American corporate greed contrasted against First Nation reverence for their land and tradition. The struggle between good

[75] Newborn wrote an essay entitled, "Solving Mysteries: The Secret of the White Rose." Originally it was intended to be the afterword of his book which he co-authored with Annette Dumbach, *Sophie Scholl and the White Rose: The Remarkable German Students who Defied Hitler*. In this essay, he suggests that the White Rose novel was the inspiration for the group's name. For more information about the origins of the name and how the novel resonated with Hans Scholl and Alexander Schmorell who co-authored the first four White Rose flyers in summer 1942, see http://www.judnewborn.com/jud-solvingmysteries.html).

versus evil, against overwhelming odds, most likely resonated with the White Rose students and the *Munich Post*.

In late 1942 and early 1943, the White Rose students attempted to expand their circle of helpers. Through a mutual friend, they met with Falk Harnack (1913-1991). Falk's older brother, Arvid Harnack and his American born wife, Mildred Fish-Harnack were leading members of the Berlin resistance network called the Red Orchestra. Similar to the White Rose students, they were arrested and executed by the Nazis. There were never able to connect and combine their resistance efforts.

Dr. Arvid Harnack (1901-1942), was a German economist and senior governmental official in the Third Reich. He secretly worked to undermine the Nazi war efforts in a resistance circle called the Red Orchestra (*Rote Kapelle)*. He and another leading figure in the Red Orchestra, German solider Harro Schulze-Boysen (1909-1942) provided critical information to the American and Soviet embassies, including information about Nazi preparations to invade the Soviet Union in 1941. They were sentenced to death for high treason and hanged in Plötzensee Prison in Berlin in

December 1942. The first of the eleven leading resisters in the Harnack/Schulze-Boysen group were hung at that time (Scholl, 2016, p. 149).[76] Arvid's wife, Dr. Mildred Fish-Harnack, was beheaded February 16, 1943 in Berlin. She was born in 1902 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she had met Arvid who was studying there on a Rockefeller scholarship. They married and moved to Germany where they secretly led resistance activities. Fish-Harnack is the only American woman executed on Hitler's direct orders.[77]

Similar to the Red Orchestra, the White Rose resistance group embodied independent thinking, individual responsibility,

[76] Falk Harnack had contacted his cousins Dietrich and Klaus Bonhoeffer in Berlin. They encouraged him to try to save what was left of his brother's resistance circle and indicated they would help him. They were eager for him to connect them with the White Rose students in Munich.

[77] Mildred was a translator, journalist, and highly educated academic and educator. The Harnacks were arrested in September 1942, tried separately, detained, and tortured. Arvid was found guilty and executed for treason in December, and although Mildred was originally sentenced to six years of hard labor, Hitler himself intervened. He ordered a retrial and execution. Since 1986, Mildred's birthday, September 16, has been recognized as a special day of observance in Wisconsin public schools. In 2019, a monument/sculpture was dedicated to her in Madison, Wisconsin. German schools and streets are named after her and the oldest public school in Milwaukee is named after her. See the resources in the appendix for further information.

and tolerance. American publications such as *The New York Times* and *TIME Newsmagazine* referenced the White Rose students and the fatal consequences of their actions soon after they were arrested in 1943. The White Rose continues to impact people around the world and their spirit lives on in social media, books, and cultural events that commemorate their short but significant lives. American playwright Lillian Garrett-Groag, for example, wrote the play *The White Rose*. It premiered in the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, California in 1991. As recent as 2017, students affiliated with the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Know Better Productions performed the play in the Broom Street Theater in Madison, Wisconsin. Finally in February 2021, Plough Publishing House based in New York, released *Freiheit! The White Rose Graphic Novel*. Despite the passage of time and the distance of Europe, the legacy of the White Rose inspires Germans and Americans alike. We remain connected in hope and humanity.

Appendix A

Self-reflect, join the narrative, and share their story

"Carry on what we began."
"Weitertragen, was wir begonnen haben."

Willi Graf on the day of his execution. He was 25 years old.
October 12, 1943

Willi Graf was the last of the Munich students to be executed by the Nazis. Of those who were executed in 1943, he spent the longest time in prison as well (8 months). He didn't ask, "What can be done?" He asked, "What can I do?" Here are examples of what he did.

- As a teenager, he refused to join the Hitler Youth and joined illegal Catholic youth groups instead.
- He refused to enroll in the liberal arts, his ideal university curriculum, and chose medical studies instead because they were less Nazified.
- Throughout his short life, he refused to relinquish his freedom of thought and read books and authors banned by the Nazis.
- He refused to take a life and served as a combat paramedic when drafted by the German army. He was also a member of the German Red Cross.
- When deployed to the Russian front twice during the Second World War, he refused to treat innocent

civilians as the enemy and helped them at risk of severe reprimand/punishment by his military superiors.

- When arrested and interrogated by the Gestapo after the White Rose members were apprehended in February 1943, Willi Graf refused to cooperate and give up the names of his friends whom he had contacted or recruited. He spared their lives at the expense of his own.

Questions for consideration

The White Rose students had no formal authority or positional power. How do you think they mastered their fear to confront evil? What can we learn from them? How can we honor them and safeguard their story?

The White Rose circle remained true to their convictions. How do you think they empowered themselves? What do you do to remain steadfast to your values and ideals?

How do you follow your conscience? What gives you courage?

The White Rose students weren't bystanders and intervened on behalf of others. What are some ways we can express solidarity and compassion with others in today's world?

Appendix B
Additional Resources

The White Rose Foundation, Munich, Germany. The White Rose Foundation Memorial is located near the atrium in Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (also known as LMU).

General Information about the White Rose https://www.weisse-rose-stiftung.de/white-rose-resistance-group/

Information about the travelling exhibition and audio guides in English
https://www.weisse-rose-stiftung.de/exhibition-the-white-rose/

The White Rose Leaflets in German (Flyers)
https://www.weisse-rose-stiftung.de/white-rose-resistance-group/leaflets-of-the-white-rose/

White Rose Wall Slogans (Graffiti) from February 1943
https://www.weisse-rose-stiftung.de/white-rose-resistance-group/white-rose-wall-slogans/

Short video that shows how the White Rose members produced the flyers https://youtu.be/syX4xftU1xQ

White Rose memorial organ concert near the atrium in LMU where the Scholl siblings distributed the last of their flyers on February 18, 1943. They were arrested the same day, tried at a mock trial, and executed February 22, 1943 along with Christoph Probst. (This concert was recorded on February 22, 2021.)
https://youtu.be/I1vVdewvPz4

The White Rose Institute is also located in Munich, Germany.
https://weisserose.info/

The White Rose Project at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom
https://whiteroseproject.org/the-white-rose-in-real-time/

Willi Graf of the White Rose: Words, Will, and a Way to Resist (Short Blog Post)
https://whiteroseproject.org/willi-graf-and-a-way-to-resist/

The White Rose Pamphlets in English (Flyers)
https://whiteroseproject.org/resources/pamphlets-in-english/

Writing and Resistance: The White Rose Pamphlets – A Live Reading (Monday, February 22, 2021)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqhoCj5MXzo&feature=youtu.be&ab_channel=TORCH%7CTheOxfordResearchCentreintheHumanities

Freiheit: *The White Rose Graphic Novel* Trailer (2021)
https://youtu.be/18EDM8IUi2k

Willi Graf of the White Rose: Faith Under Fire (Online Article)
http://www.kritische-ausgabe.de/artikel/faith-under-fire

Sophie Scholl: The Final Days (Award-winning film from 2005)
https://youtu.be/baRvF6ZBK18

The National WWII Museum: Sophie Scholl and the White Rose
https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/sophie-scholl-and-white-rose

Interview with Dr. Traute Page in her home in South Carolina, USA, in 2018
https://youtu.be/QMk6kumX0yM

German Resistance Memorial Center in Berlin, Germany (See the individual biographies for the White Rose members as well as these.) https://www.gdw-berlin.de/en/home/

Traute Lafrenz's Biography https://www.gdw-berlin.de/en/recess/biographies/index_of_persons/biographie/view-bio/traute-lafrenz/?no_cache=1

Hans Leipelt's Biography https://www.gdw-berlin.de/en/recess/biographies/index_of_persons/biographie/view-bio/hans-leipelt/?no_cache=1

Falk Harnack's Biography https://www.gdw-berlin.de/en/recess/biographies/index_of_persons/biographie/view-bio/falk-harnack/?no_cache=1

Arvid Harnack's Biography https://www.gdw-berlin.de/en/recess/biographies/index_of_persons/biographie/view-bio/arvid-harnack/?no_cache=1

Mildred Fish-Harnack of the Nazi resistance network called the Red Orchestra
https://news.wisc.edu/mildred-fish-harnack-honored-as-hero-of-resistance-to-nazi-regime/

Wisconsin Public Television Documentary about Mildred Fish-Harnack, the only American woman executed on Adolf Hitler's direct orders
https://pbswisconsin.org/wisconsins-nazi-resistance-the-mildred-fish-harnack-story/

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Holocaust Encyclopedia
The White Rose Opposition Movement
https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/white-rose

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum YouTube Channel
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC15plGNCMRkMmREMNkbYJPA

Appendix C

Explanatory Notes About the Photographs Taken by Stephani Richards-Wilson

(All photographs were taken in 2018 except for those related to Know Better Productions and The White Rose play performance, which were taken in 2017. Image #9 is from the Internet.)

Image one

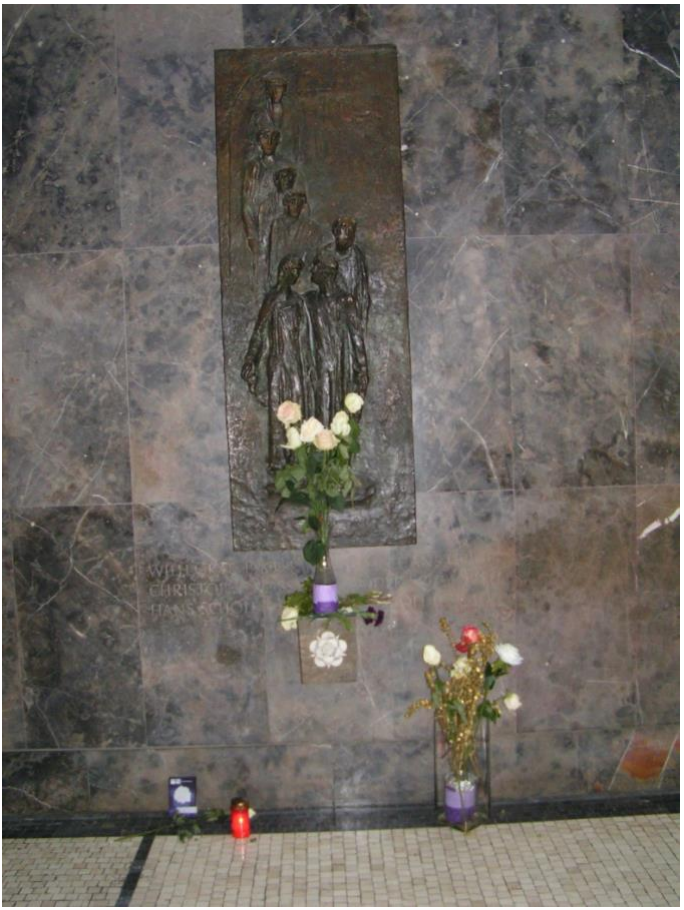
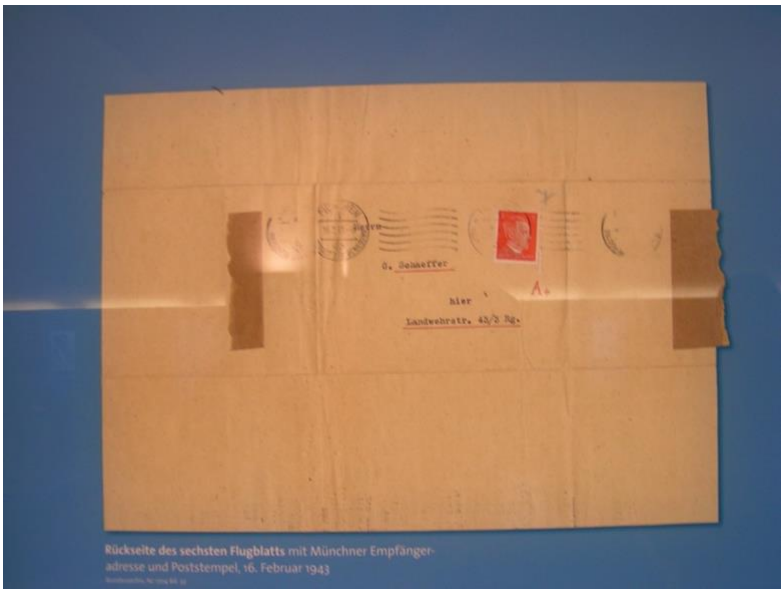


Image two

Image three



Rückseite des sechsten Flugblatts mit Münchner Empfängeradresse und Poststempel, 16. Februar 1943

Image four

DIE FLUGBLÄTTER. AUFRUF ZUM WIDERSTAND
Hitler kann den Krieg nicht gewinnen.

Image five

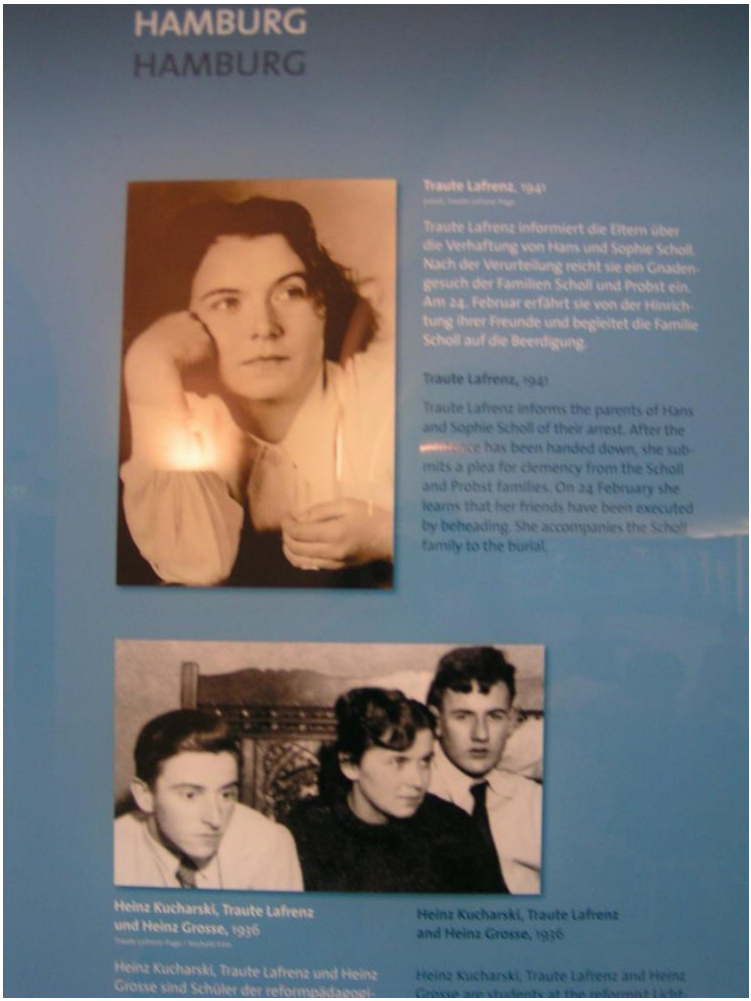
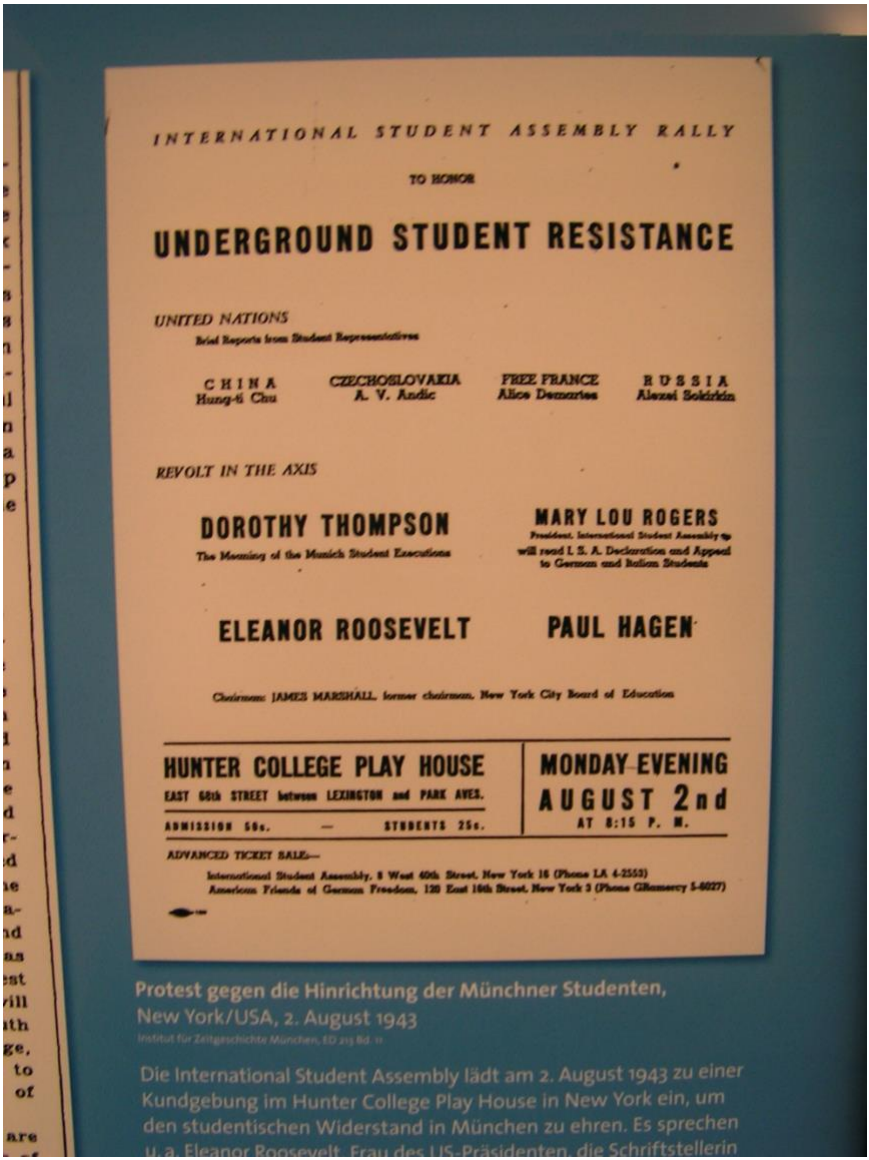

HAMBURG
HAMBURG
Traute Lafrenz, 1941
Traute Lafrenz informiert die Eltern über die Verhaftung von Hans und Sophie Scholl. Nach der Verurteilung reicht sie ein Gnadengesuch der Familien Scholl und Probst ein. Am 24. Februar erfährt sie von der Hinrichtung ihrer Freunde und begleitet die Familie Scholl auf die Beerdigung.
Traute Lafrenz, 1941
Traute Lafrenz informs the parents of Hans and Sophie Scholl of their arrest. After the
ce has been handed down, she submits a plea for clemency from the Scholl and Probst families. On 24 February she learns that her friends have been executed by beheading. She accompanies the Scholl family to the burial.
Heinz Kucharski, Traute Lafrenz und Heinz Grosse, 1936
Heinz Kucharski, Traute Lafrenz und Heinz Grosse sind Schüler der reformpädagogi-
Heinz Kucharski, Traute Lafrenz and Heinz Grosse, 1936

Image six


INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSEMBLY RALLY
TO HONOR
UNDERGROUND STUDENT RESISTANCE
UNITED NATIONS
Brief Reports from Student Representatives
CHINA
Hung-li Chu
CZECHOSLOVAKIA
A. V. Andic
FREE FRANCE
Alice Demarles
RUSSIA
Alexei Sokirkin
REVOLT IN THE AXIS
DOROTHY THOMPSON
The Meaning of the Munich Student Executions
MARY LOU ROGERS
President, International Student Assembly
will read U. S. A. Declaration and Appeal
to German and Italian Students
ELEANOR ROOSEVELT
PAUL HAGEN
Chairman: JAMES MARSHALL, former chairman, New York City Board of Education
HUNTER COLLEGE PLAY HOUSE
EAST 68th STREET between LEXINGTON and PARK AVES.
ADMISSION 50c. — STUDENTS 25c.
MONDAY EVENING
AUGUST 2nd
AT 8:15 P. M.
ADVANCED TICKET SALE—
International Student Assembly, 8 West 40th Street, New York 18 (Phone LA 4-2553)
American Friends of German Freedom, 120 East 16th Street, New York 3 (Phone GRamercy 5-6027)

Protest gegen die Hinrichtung der Münchner Studenten, New York/USA, 2. August 1943

Institut für Zeitgeschichte München, ED 213 Bd. 11

Die International Student Assembly lädt am 2. August 1943 zu einer Kundgebung im Hunter College Play House in New York ein, um den studentischen Widerstand in München zu ehren. Es sprechen u. a. Eleanor Roosevelt, Frau des US-Präsidenten, die Schriftstellerin

Image seven

Image eight

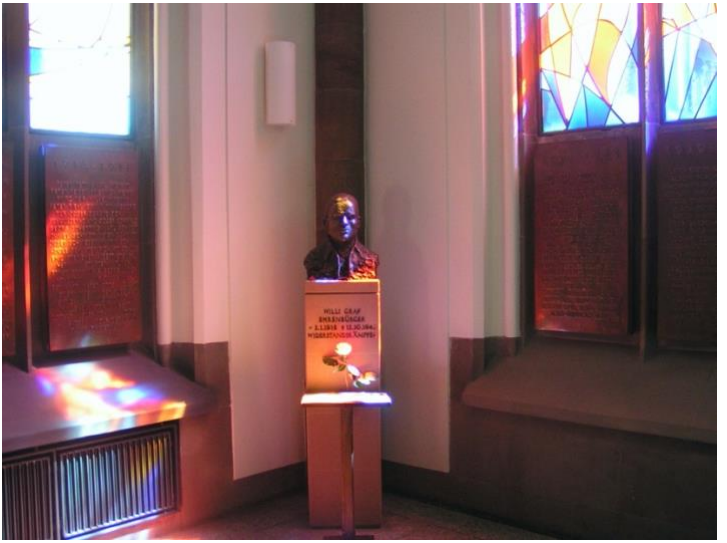


Image nine

From the community: Oakton to host events focusing on student resistance against the Nazis April 10

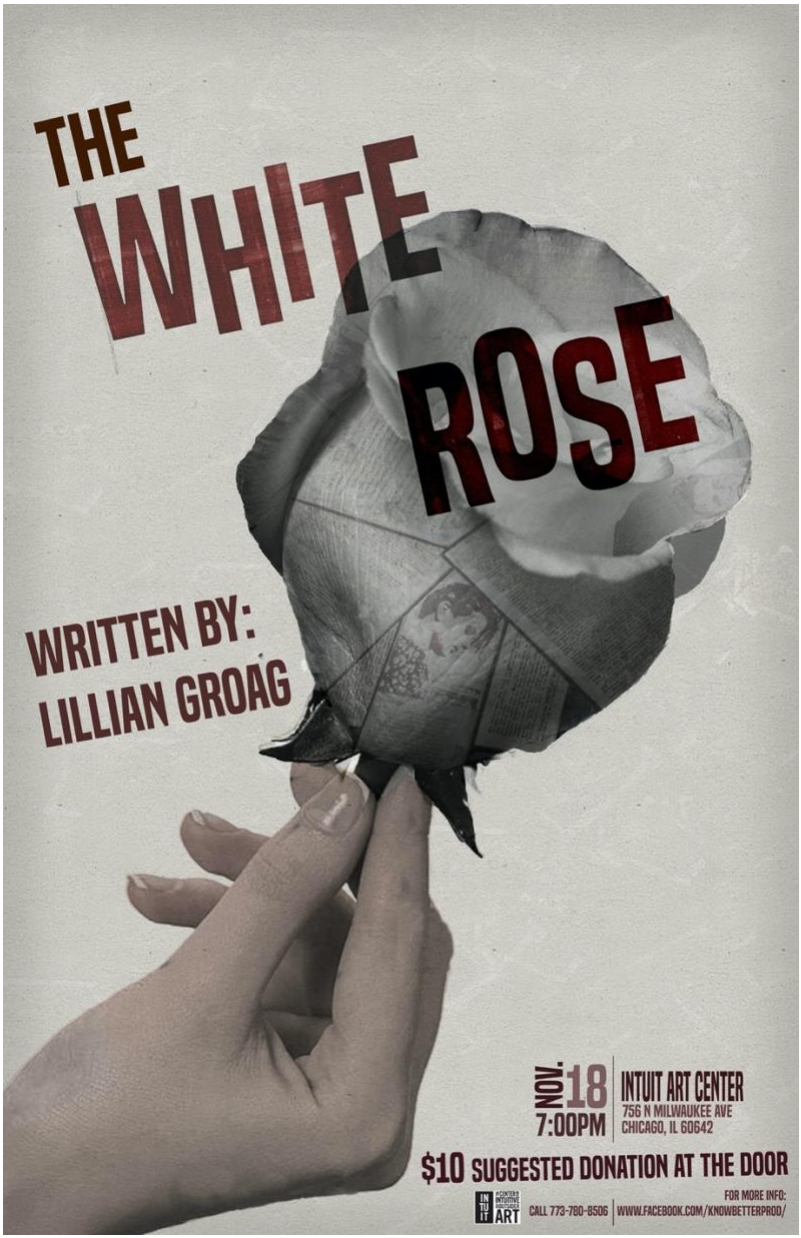
Posted by Oakton Community College, Community Contributor

By Community Contributor Oakton Community College

MARCH 23, 2018, 3:26 PM

Image ten

Image eleven



Guide to images

1. Students and visitors leave lit candles and roses at the White Rose memorial near the atrium at LMU where Hans and Sophie Scholl tossed the last of their flyers from the balcony and were soon arrested. The seven individuals represent the Scholl siblings, Professor Huber, Christoph Probst, Willi Graf, Alexander Schmorell, and Hans Leipelt (1921-1945). After Professor Kurt Huber had been arrested, Leipelt and Marie-Luise Jahn collected money for his wife and although they sent the money to her anonymously, they were denounced. Previously they had received a copy of the sixth White Rose flyer in the mail. They made more copies and took some to Hamburg, Germany where their friends helped to distribute them (Weiße Rose Stiftung, 2006, p. 26). Marie-Luise was sent to a maximum-security penitentiary and Hans Leipelt was executed at Munich-Stadelheim prison on January 29, 1945, the same prison where the White Rose students had been executed in 1943.
2. The atrium at LMU which students and faculty still pass through today.
3. The Sixth White Rose flyer on display in the White Rose Foundation Memorial at LMU. The students ran out of envelopes and typed addresses on the back.
4. The White Rose Foundation Memorial at LMU.
5. Exhibit of Traute Lafrenz Page in the White Rose Foundation at LMU. She was originally from Hamburg, Germany.
6. An exhibit in the White Rose Foundation Memorial at LMU. News of the White Rose students' executions reached the United States. American students organized a protest at Hunter College in New York. They wanted to honor the White Rose students on August 2, 1943. Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of then President Franklin D. Roosevelt was scheduled to attend.
7. An exhibit in the White Rose Foundation Memorial at LMU. This is an American made Remington typewriter, similar to the one the White Rose students used to compose

their flyers. Their original typewriter was inadvertently later sold to an antique shop.

8. This bust is a memorial to Willi Graf and is located in the St. Johann city hall in Saarbrücken, Germany where he and his two sisters grew up. He is now an honorary citizen, and the city maintains his gravesite, laying white roses and a wreath near his headstone every October 12.
9. Oakton Community College in Illinois hosted the White Rose travelling exhibit on loan from the White Rose Foundation in April 2018.
10. and 11. American university students performed the White Rose play in Madison, Wisconsin in November 2017. Subsequent performances were held in Chicago. The play was written by American playwright Lillian Garrett-Groag.

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Chapter Eleven: Liberation

We start our examination of the liberators with Philip Drell, followed by a biography of General George Patton.

Philip Drell

Wendy Adele-Marie

I first met Philip and Wini Drell at an exhibition of Mr. Drell's photographs at Roosevelt University. Drell would often come to Oakton and show his images of World War Two. These images were taken from when he was in the U.S. Army as part of the SPECOU unit. The SPECOU unit had special orders from General Dwight D. Eisenhower. What this meant was that the SPECOU unit was unattached to a specific unit and could, as Drell said once in a lecture at Oakton, go anywhere "where the action was."

He was a master photographer, capturing the world through his lens, from Camp Henry Horner to World War Two. Drell documented the liberation of the beaches in Normandy, France, to the liberation of camps and Berlin's fall. He used both moving and still film to document what he witnessed. Drell had said that after

filming the war, the motion picture film was immediately sent back to the U.S. government. However, he took still images of his witness, which formed the basis for many exhibitions and student presentations.

I loved hearing his stories, especially the ones about then-Senator John F. Kennedy and Hollywood star Doris Day. Day was in Chicago for a movie premiere, Drell recalled, but would not leave her hotel suite unless someone could watch her pets. A fan club member was called, agreed to watch Day's pets, and the premiere went on.

Drell also had great stories about Ernest Hemingway, his friend Irwin Shaw, and many other famous figures. He documented an attempted assassination attempt on General Charles de Gaulle. On the 25th of August 1944, the day that Paris was liberated, Drell also took the surrender of several hundred German soldiers in Paris, speaking Yiddish to them while holding up his camera. Irwin Shaw wrote a book called *Paris, Paris.* In this book, Shaw documented how Drell, all alone, took the surrender of this group of German soldiers. Drell had told the Germans – in Yiddish

– to walk out slowly so that he could take their pictures. Drell also told students how he took part in another surrender of German troops in the south of France. There was a meal being served to the German troops, and in that context of the surrender and the dinner, Drell revealed he was Jewish.

After his passing, I have continually included his slides in lectures in tribute to him to honor Drell. I also show *D-Day to Berlin*, a documentary that highlights the SPECOU unit's work, also known as the Stevens Irregulars, that Drell was part of. The man in charge of the SPECOU unit was George Stevens, who directed dozens of films, notably *Giant* and *The Diary of Anne Frank*. If you ever watch *D-Day to Berlin*, look for Drell reading *Life* or in many other scenes. Hundreds of students have seen his work through my lens, and I try my best to recall minutiae as Drell presented it. He also loved to read, and as I have many of his books, I think he would be pleased to know how many students have benefited from them. Here follows a few of Drell's images, with annotations by the Drell family:

Inflatable decoy tank in England before invasion of France
Courtesy and permission for use in this OER only, the Drell family

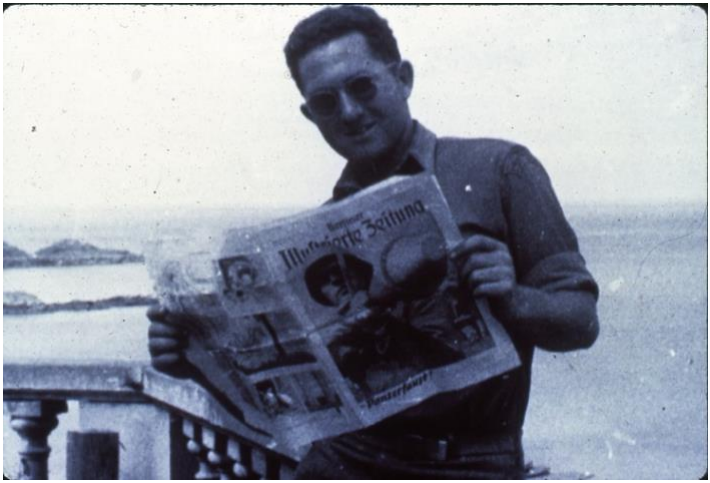
Invasion, Normandy
Courtesy and permission for use in this OER only, the Drell family

U.S. Generals (l-r) George Patton and Omar Bradley, with Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, after D-Day
Courtesy and permission for use in this OER only, the Drell family

France, Philip Drell's group: Driver (unknown), Phil, Irwin Shaw and Pinckney Ridgell (the other photographer)
Courtesy and permission for use in this OER only, the Drell family

General Dwight D. Eisenhower and other military officials and members from other branches of Allied forces, France, after victory at Normandy,1944

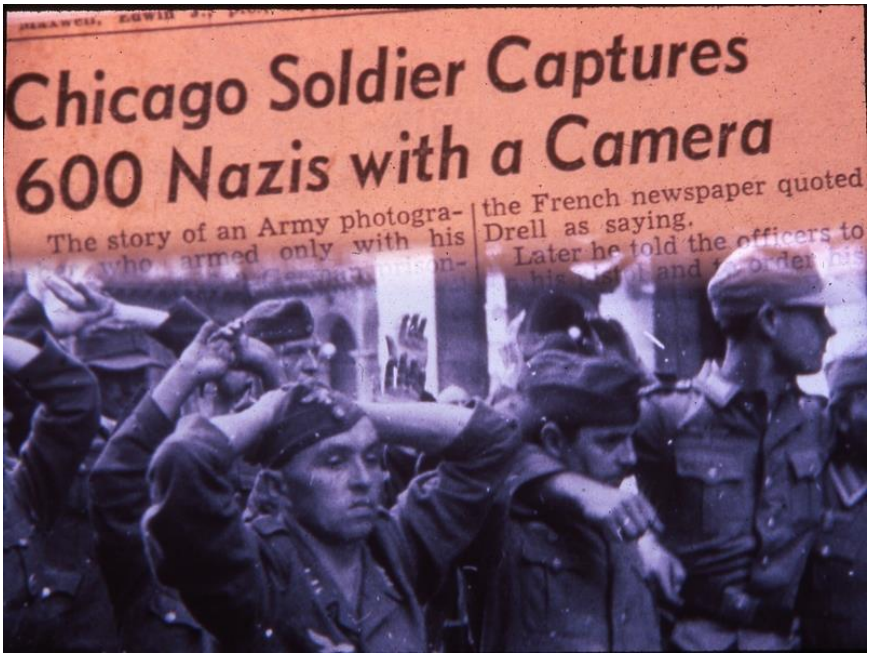
Courtesy and permission for use in this OER only, the Drell family



Philip Drell, late 1944

Courtesy and permission for use in this OER only, the Drell family

George Stevens Sr. and Irwin Shaw before retaking Paris
Courtesy and permission for use in this OER only, the Drell family


Chicago Soldier Captures
600 Nazis with a Camera
The story of an Army photogra-
the French newspaper quoted
Drell as saying.

Chicago newspaper headline of Philip of he alone taking the surrender of 600 Nazis … with a camera.
Courtesy and permission for use in this OER only, the Drell family

Philip Drell's hand holding a card in front of his camera at the liberation of Dachau *Courtesy and permission for use in this OER only, the Drell family*

Liberation of Dachau concentration camp, with Philip Drell taking a picture of other GIs coming across train cars of the victims of the Nazis. *Courtesy and permission for use in this OER only, the Drell family*

Philip Drell at the liberation of Dachau *Courtesy and permission for use in this OER only, the Drell family*

One of my students, Ameen Khan, was especially interested in Philip Drell's work. Ameen had an idea to honor Drell. He put together a photographic exhibit displayed at Oakton's Skokie campus. In May of 2019, along with a presentation by Magda Brown, a dear friend, and a survivor, Ameen presented his work on Drell. His wife Wini, and his daughter Robi, are my dear friends and graciously agreed to spend time with Ameen to review his presentation. Here are Ameen's recollections of that day. The picture of the camera is one that Drell used to document the war.

Philip Drell: The Liberator and Documentarian

Ameen Khan

The Holocaust was an extremely dark period of time when millions of Jewish and other peoples were oppressed, tortured, and viciously murdered. Adolf Hitler, Germany's Nazi party leader, and his soldiers carried out one of the largest mass genocides in history. They brutally tortured millions of Jewish people before they would mercilessly murder them. While today we have a great deal of information on what exactly transpired during the Holocaust and the horrors that came of it, it is impossible truly to put into words the senseless and barbaric actions that took place during World War II. The most valuable documentation of the Holocaust we have is the powerful, heart-wrenching photographs that remind us how important it is never to forget the events that

transpired between the years 1938-1945. While the Holocaust was a dark and horrific period of time, it also serves as a reminder that there is good in people, even in the darkest of times. There were many heroes during the Holocaust that risked their own lives, intending to rescue as many Jewish people as possible. One of these heroes was a man named Philip Drell, a photographer during the Holocaust, who will always be remembered for his bravery and selflessness during a very dark period of time.

Philip Drell, born in Chicago, IL, in 1919, was assigned to the Special Motion Pictures Coverage Unit (SPECOU) when he was enlisted in the army back in September of 1942. Philip Drell was assigned to film and document special events such as the Battle of the Bulge and the liberation of Paris. A few weeks after the liberation of Paris, Philip Drell and his unit went to capture photographs of Allied troops surrounding 20,000 Germans. The Germans refused to surrender and took Philip Drell and his unit in as guests for a week. While Philip Drell was in the care of the German army, he was strong-willed and wanted them to know that he was of the Jewish faith. However, it was not until Philip Drell's

unit moved through France and into Germany after they had documented the invasion of Normandy that he would witness the horrors of the Holocaust. On April 29, 1945, Philip Drell and his unit arrived at the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp. He took photographs in the Dachau concentration camps and witnessed some of the most unspeakable acts of violence that no one should ever have to witness. Some of the photographs that he had captured depicted hundreds of dead bodies of Jewish prisoners piled upon each other. It is estimated that 25,000 people died at the Dachau concentration camp. While extremely difficult to look at, the photographs themselves are essential pieces of history that show us honestly how much pain and suffering Jewish people had to endure during the Holocaust.

After years of being mentally and physically tortured by Hitler and the Nazi regime, the Jewish prisoners of Dachau were liberated by the U.S. Seventh Army's 45th Infantry Division in April of 1945. The concentration camp was filled with thousands of dead bodies; however, there were roughly 30,000 survivors that were liberated, many of whom were severely malnourished. Philip

Drell, along with his SPECOU unit, spent time documenting the horrors that had taken place at the camp.

One of the photographs that Philip Drell captured was of a Nazi guard that was beaten to death by one of the liberated prisoners in the act of rage. The amount of emotional and physical abuse that these prisoners were put through is unfathomable. Another photograph that Philip Drell managed to capture, shortly after the liberation, was a truckload of bread for the survivors. Unfortunately, due to severe malnourishment, some of them could not tolerate solid food and died as a result. Since many could not tolerate the bread, they were given soup to nourish them for a while. Unfortunately, many of the liberated survivors still did not survive due to the extreme torture that they had suffered.

During my time at Oakton Community College, I can without a doubt say that taking Professor Adele-Marie's, *History of the Holocaust* course was one of the best decisions I have ever made. Before taking this course, I had a fundamental understanding of the events that transpired during the Holocaust;

however, after taking this course, it has immensely expanded my knowledge of the subject and changed how I view certain things. Whenever I thought about the Holocaust, I associated everything and everyone with as completely evil without having a broader understanding of it. This course taught me that even in the darkest of times, people such as Philip Drell would do anything they can to shed some light on the atrocities humans can perpetrate. In 2019, I had the privilege of creating and displaying memorial artwork that showcased a few of the photographs that Philip Drell captured during the Holocaust. I also had the honor of meeting and speaking to the wife and daughter of Philip Drell, Wini and Robi Drell, who could not have been more helpful and gracious with their time. Finally, I want to thank Professor Adele-Marie, Wini Drell, and Robi Drell for taking the time out of their busy schedules and answering any questions on Phillip Drell. Philip Drell is a man who will always be remembered for his courage, bravery, and selflessness. He serves as a reminder that good people will shine their light even in the darkest of times.

Patton: Building of a Great Military Leader

Brian D. Naimola

General George S. Patton Jr. was a complicated leader. He had the talent to motivate and inspire soldiers like no other leader, but he also had the temperament to degrade and go against the norm. He had a flair for leadership that was direct and bordered on unforgiving; nevertheless, he truly cared for his soldiers. His rigid toughness and self-sacrifice prompted pride within his command. However, his aggressive acts and volatile temper led to many controversies throughout his career. He was a religious man who read the Bible often and could recite many passages, but his frequent use of profanity was unparalleled. Although these complications may be accurate, General Patton's earlier life built an incomparable leader.

The building blocks of General Patton's early childhood established his leadership characteristics. His family upbringing is the primary building block, followed by his educational experiences. Building on that foundation, he continued to add leadership responsibilities throughout his career. Patton established

and continually refined his unique set of leadership characteristics. These leadership characteristics eventually allowed Patton to become a great military leader.

Early Life

George S. Patton Jr. was born to an affluent family and enjoyed a privileged upbringing. Early in his life, he had difficulties in reading and writing. Dyslexia and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) potentially contributed to his low ability to read and write (Blumenson, 1985). Blumenson highlighted that little was known at this time in history about these Learning Disabilities (LD), so Patton was never officially diagnosed with a learning disability. Throughout these early years, his aunt and parents devoted a significant amount of time reading to him and telling him stories. Many of these stories involved the discussions of his military foregathers and the Bible (Blumenson, 1985).

Due to his inability to read and write and not wanting him to have to deal with cruel classmates, Blumenson (1985) also commented that Mama and Papa kept Patton out of the school system until he was 11 years old. At that time, he began his formal

education. Patton first attended Steven Cutter Clark's Classical School for Boys, then Virginia Military Institute, and finally, West Point before officially entering the Army (Hirshson, 2002).

Family

Family structure and upbringing shape our adult life. Bakhsh et al. (2018) observed that personal traits mature when parents oversee the child's learning. Vries and Treacy (1999) asserted that early years and family are significant life factors that significantly influence personal characteristics, notably leadership capabilities. Patton's family life helped form the distinctive leadership style he exercised later in life.

Aunt Annie (Nannie). One of the more unusual fixtures in the Patton house was Patton's Aunt Nannie. When Ruth Wilson married George Patton II, her sister, Annie, affixed herself to the married couple and became like a surrogate mother and spoiled the young Patton (The National Interest, 2020). Nannie was the Patton household dictatorial ruler and did not allow Patton to be punished, as reported by The National Interest (2020). The National Interest also observes that Nannie read the Bible to Patton for up to four

hours daily. From these readings, Jesus emerged as the prototypical example of human courage.

Mother. Ruth Wilson (Mama) hailed from an affluent family and married George Patton II on December 10, 1884 (Hirshson, 2002). The bond between Mama and son was not as strong as the bond he shared with Papa. Nightly, Patton gave his mother one good night kiss but then showered his father with many kisses (Blumenson, 1985). Mama was very protective of her son and did not want Patton to go to school until later than most children in an attempt to shield him from being ridiculed for his lack of reading and writing abilities.

Father. George Patton II (Papa) was a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) before making his way to California with his wife, Ruth. Hirshson (2002) note that Patton's father spent several terms as the district attorney of Los Angeles and had ineffective attempts at running for other public offices, including one as a Congressional Democratic candidate. When Patton was born in 1885, Papa gave up practicing law and took

over his father-in-law's business to save it from another relative's mishandling.

Blumenson (1985) reported that there was a healthy and close bond between Papa and his son. He pointed out that Patton would wield a wooden sword that Papa had carved for him, and the two would play soldiers often. Also, every day, Papa would salute Patton and ask how the private was doing. Papa taught Patton how to ride a horse in the horse saddle from which his late Grandfather, Colonel George S. Patton, was fatally wounded during the Civil War. Papa also spent much time reading to him from Greek Mythology, William Shakespeare, and Sir Walter Scott, and he would also tell military stories based on his ancestry (Blumenson, 1985).

Military Influences at a young age

Due to Patton's early life's influence, Patton believed that he would be a General someday, predisposed by his father's stories of the heroic ancestors that preceded Patton. Blumenson (1985) points out that Papa was an excellent storyteller and would speak of extravagant and possibly inflated tales of his forefathers,

including Robert Patton, a Brigadier General, a friend of George Washington who fought in the Revolutionary War. Also, he would speak of the six great-uncles who were Confederate Soldiers in the Civil War; and their brother, Patton's Grandfather, who was fatally wounded while fighting with his troops. In addition to these great Patton soldiers, Blumenson also suggests that there were several of Patton's cousins that Papa would tell tales of who held high ranks within the military. Papa also had a short military career. Through all of these real-life heroes, Papa was able to tell the tales of war, courage, and gallantry.

Mama's side of the family also contributed to Patton's military influences. The National Interest (2020) indicates that among the living military benchmarks was Patton's step-grandfather, Colonel George Hugh Smith, whose accounts of the Civil War introduced a deep sense of purpose in Patton. Blumenson (1985) observes that Smith might have been the most significant influence on Patton's determination to become a soldier and continue the family's military heritage. Blumenson (1985) states that Patton idolized his military forefathers, and what Patton

feared the most was to discredit himself in their eyes by coming up short of their standards.

Schooling

Besides what a student learns from books, schools shape how students act, what they are, and whom they will grow into over time. Riley (2019) notes that a student's ability to fit into school is "shaped by what they bring to it – their histories, their day-to-day lived realities – as well as schools' practices and expectations" (p. 96). Different types of environments enable students to experience various kinds of learning and different experiences for students. Patton experienced an eclectic range of schooling experiences, including homeschooling, private school, and military education. Even with his learning disabilities, he survived the rigors of schooling.

Learning Disabilities. Merriam-Webster (2020) defines dyslexia as "a learning disability involving difficulties in acquiring and processing language typically manifested by a lack of proficiency in reading, spelling, and writing." Hirshson (2002) explains that Patton could neither read nor write until he was

almost twelve years old. However, Patton could recite from memory Bible passages, poetry, and large portions of history. Dyslexia is not just a matter of inverting letters and numbers but is a complex condition whose symptoms include hyperactivity, intolerance, attitude swings, and recklessness. In a letter Patton wrote to his future wife, while he was a West Point Cadet, he called attention to his dyslexia, saying, “it is beastly hard for me to learn” (Dietrich, 1989, p. 389). Patton recognized his reading and writing limitations while in school, but he continued to push himself to overcome and eventually became an avid reader.

Blumenson (1985) also emphasizes that Patton had another learning disability, which eventually came to be known as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), a neurological-chemical condition. Merriam-Webster (2020) notes that individuals with ADD show signs of hyperactivity and impulsivity. The National Interest (2020) points out that other ADD symptoms include compulsiveness, extreme mood swings, and bad tempers. Patton exhibited these symptoms even at an early age. Costello and Stone (2012) maintain that individuals with these learning disabilities

tend to avoid events where they feel inadequate and become frustrated but overcompensate these issues by achieving in other areas. Blumenson (1985) suggests that Papa and Mama hired tutors to help Patton overcome his learning disabilities. Once they were comfortable with his reading and writing abilities, they sent him to private school.

Private school. Dietrich (1989) points out that Patton began his schooling at Stephen Clark's Classical School for Boys. Patton spent six years getting an excellent private school education fulfilling his high school requirements. He was a hardworking student who struggled with many of his subjects because of his dyslexia. Dietrich also pointed out that Patton meticulously made many annotations throughout his books, possibly to make up for his dyslexia.

Military schools. After graduating from Stephen Clark's Classical School for Boys, Patton went on to VMI for one year. Blumenson and Hymel (2008) note that at VMI, Patton was in "Patton country," as VMI is where his father and Grandfather and six of his great uncles had all attended school. The National

Interest (2020) emphasizes that even with Patton's average school record at the Classical School for Boys, it was a given that Patton would be admitted into VMI as there had been a Patton presence at VMI since its founding.

Patton started to come into his own at VMI. The college's atmosphere was an excellent opportunity to begin acclimating to the military mindset. What he did at VMI would pave his way to West Point. National Interest (2020) also pointed out that even though his academic grades were average, he was applying himself with passion, and his military work surpassed his VMI classmates. Blumenson and Hymel (2008) pointed out how hard Papa worked his political allies to include Judge Harry Lee and Senator Barb to get Patton's appointment to West Point. Like his time at VMI, Blumenson and Hymel also remark that after getting to West Point, Patton excelled in the military aspects but was just middle of the road from an academic point of view.

Leeman (2015) indicates that Patton had a few setbacks in his first year, as he failed mathematics and then had to repeat a year. Leeman also noted that Patton was demoted from First

Corporal to Sixth Corporal after failing to follow directions and protocol by putting more of his men on report than his fellow Corporals. Even with these setbacks, Patton was coming into his element and eventually graduated with West Point's second-highest rank of corporal adjutant (National Interest, 2020). Patton's unique decisions and break in protocol while at West Point began to establish his leadership style that would be evident throughout the remainder of his military career

Leadership

Leadership is complex to explain with a singular definition. The understanding of leadership is generally known; however, no two descriptions are precisely the same. To search for the "definition of leadership," on April 11, 2020, Google yielded about 1,800,000,000 results. In its purest form, Merriam-Webster (2020) defines leadership as "the act or an instance of leading." Even though leadership is unique to every person, some common ways and characteristics define the term.

Military Leadership

There are specific military leadership characteristics that have demonstrated themselves time and again. The Army defines leadership as "the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization" (Department of the Army, 2019, p. 1–3). The military builds and continuously refines individuals' leadership skills. Patton exemplified these sound leadership characteristics.

Leadership Characteristics

Leadership characteristics are traits that define successful leaders. Leaders need to perfect and cultivate these characteristics to have an impact on the individuals they lead. Successful leaders must possess these traits to reach the highest levels of leadership. Patton uniquely epitomized these leadership characteristics.

Maxwell's Leadership Attributes

In *Developing the Leader Within You 2.0*, John Maxwell (2018) identified eight components of leadership characteristics that define a leader's success. Possessing these characteristics can make the difference between ordinary leaders and great leaders. He

observes that “leadership can be developed” (p. ix). Some individuals are born with these characteristics, but Patton developed these traits and refined them throughout his life.

Influence. Maxwell (2018), in quoting John C. Georges, “Leadership is the ability to obtain followers” (p. 3). If no one wants to follow a leader in the first place, they are not a true leader. The ability to influence is to affect the actions and opinions of others into following. It is also about understanding what motivates individuals and using that understanding to leverage their performance. When looking at leadership as the ability to influence others towards achieving a common goal, it becomes apparent that influence is the foundation of leadership. Patton had a fantastic ability to influence his soldiers. Major Isaac White illustrates this:

> [Patton] really inspired everybody with the idea that when you have gone just as far as you can go, you can still go a little bit further. You might not have loved him, but you respected him and admired him, and you wanted to put out for him. Every unit in the division developed a very fierce

> and intense pride in its accomplishments. (as cited in Axelrod, 1999, p.183)

Leaders must lead from the front and motivate their Soldiers to follow.

Major White's analysis shows the epitome of Patton's ability to obtain followers. Patton's men believed that when a person gives their all, they always had more to deliver. Patton understood how to motivate and get the most out of the Soldiers. Patton led by example and would not put his soldiers in a position that he felt they could not win. Patton always showed pride in his organizations. Patton's pride was infectious, causing his soldiers to follow him into intense war situations out of personal satisfaction and dedication.

Priorities. Maxwell (2018) notes that leaders look forward and prioritize requirements. Thought-out priorities enable leaders to ascertain the most significant priorities and where they need to focus their attention. Successful leaders prioritize based on the following principles:

Smarter over Harder. Working smarter over harder generally means thinking through projects to minimize steps so that individuals are using their time effectively. Maxwell (2018) notes that it is "finding better ways to work and making the most of the moments you have" (p. 30). Williamson (2009) summed up Patton's working smarter, not harder mentality in remembering Patton's words "When you make a mistake in war, the punishment is death! The trouble in your mistake could cause hundreds of soldiers to die" (p.54). It is better to teach the team the best way to work, not to lose productivity from a leadership perspective. The emphasis should be on focusing on the proper requirements at the right time or experiencing consequences in the long run.

You Can't Have It All. Maxwell (2018) notes that to be successful, individuals need to make tough choices and prioritize. Axelrod (1999) alludes to the "you cannot have it all" theme with a Patton quote of "A good plan, violently executed now, is better than a perfect plan next week" (p. 130). As a General Officer with the responsibility of thousands of soldiers, Patton often had to make judgments based on what information was available at that

time. However, he knew he had to decide and execute the best he could with the limited information; otherwise, the enemy would have an opportunity to destroy them. Leadership is about establishing a level of balance.

Best over Good. Maxwell (2018) observes that sometimes leaders need to forego the good and go for the best. Axelrod (1999) establishes that Patton lectured, "Man is the only war machine. Always remember that man is the only machine that can win the war. It's nice to have good equipment, but man is the key" (p. 145). Patton understood that the best thing he had going for him was his Soldiers. With all the technology in the world, men are still required to use that technology.

Proactive over Reactive. Maxwell (2018) highlights that "to be an effective leader, you need to be proactive" and also notes that "reactive means losing" (p. 32). Axelrod (1999) highlights a proactive versus reactive Patton leadership characteristic quote in "We are not going to dig any foxholes and wait for the enemy to come shootin' at us. We will be shootin' at them first" (p.53). From the quote, Patton shows that he is about pushing forward and

not allowing his soldier to sit back and react. Patton's leadership philosophy showed that attacking the problem and being proactive encourages the soldiers to move and progress.

Character. Maxwell (2018) notes that within a character is trust and that "trust is a relationship between a trustor and a trustee" (p. 53). Without trust, even if people follow a leader today, they will not follow for long. With as brash as Patton was, he built an extreme level of trust within his organizations. He had the highest confidence and trust in his soldiers to accomplish his audacious goals. Williamson (2009) pointed out that Patton would say this about soldiers, "they will not trust you if you do not trust them" (p. 31). Trust is a critical component of character and goes to show that trust is a two-way street.

Positive Change. People are not generally opposed to change; they tend to refrain from being changed (Maxwell, 2018). Change requires individuals to get out of their safe havens and face new circumstances. Williamson (2009) related a story of Patton and the necktie order with the I Armored Corps. Before Patton took over command of the I Armored Corps, the soldiers were a

ragtag bunch that did not wear proper uniforms. Patton wanted his soldiers to have pride in themselves and knew the change should start with appearance. He lectured to the troops that pride builds confidence, confidence builds courage, and courage builds a significant level of bravery. Immediately all soldiers were dressed better than the average soldier, which gave them the pride and strength to walk tall. A key to successfully implementing positive change is that leaders ensure they communicate ahead of time the change's goal and why it is happening. Patton was successful in communicating and thus built a strong band of soldiers.

Problem Solving. Successful leaders allow for problem-solving at the lowest level (Maxwell, 2018). Leaders need to know how to solve the issues and prioritize them, but more notably, they need to delegate them. So, the task of a leader is to build confidence in individuals to handle issues for themselves. Two notable Patton quotes that epitomize his leadership belief in allowing for problem-solving at the lowest level is "never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do, and they will surprise you with their ingenuity" and "if you tell people where to

go, but not how to get there, you'll be amazed at the results" (Axelrod, 1999, pp. 165 & 167). These quotes showed that Patton had trust in his soldiers. He was willing and confident to let his staff solve problems creatively at the lowest possible level through his military knowledge.

Attitude. Maxwell (2018) notes that a "leader's attitude must exemplify resolve, tenacity, focus, determination, and commitment" (p. 121). It is an attitude that motivates and ultimately sustains success. Axelrod (1999) highlighted a Patton quote that sums up his ideals with "we will win because we will never lose. There can never be defeat if a man refuses to accept defeat" (p. 55). The attitude of a leader is what will drive the team to success versus failure. Successful leaders understand that the correct attitude will set the right tone, enabling the team's best response.

Serving People. Maxwell (2018) notes that "leadership is based on serving others, not ourselves" (p. 146). Great leaders serve their followers. A common theme in the Army is that if leaders take care of their soldiers, the soldiers will, in turn, support

their leader. Williamson (2009) explained how Patton was always concerned about all his soldiers regardless of their rank or assignment. He also points out how Patton was adamant about his soldiers not having to do things that were not essential to the mission. Servant leaders provide growth and opportunities for others. Axelrod (1999) pointed out that Patton believed in training a person to do his job then getting out of the way. Successful leaders prepare followers to take over their job.

Vision. A vision focuses on the future of the organization. Successful leaders have a vision of what they have to accomplish in supporting the mission. Maxwell (2018) explains that vision sets the direction for which the team will follow. Patton was able to inspire his troops by proclaiming his vision in a style that only he could do. “The very thought of losing is hateful to Americans. An army is a team. It lives, eats, sleeps, and fights as a team. This individuality stuff is a bunch of bullshit” (Axelrod, 1999, p. 4). Great leaders know how to inspire a team through a vision, and from that, they motivate others to follow.

Liberation

Patton was not only a complicated leader; he was also a complicated human being. Patton was not very sympathetic to the Jewish community, but much credit is bestowed upon him in the liberation of the Buchenwald, Mauthausen-Gusen, Dachau, and satellite camps (Laufer, 2018). Laufer explains that as many survivors were near death in these camps, Patton's Army penetrated deep into German territory and drove the German's away from the concentration camps.

Buchenwald was the first concentration camp that Patton's Sixth Armored Division liberated on April 11, 1945, where there were 21,000 known survivors (Hirschman & Hill, 1996). Laufer reported that "Patton was the miracle they prayed for" (p.313). Hirschman and Hill noted that as Patton's Sixth Armored Division was driving towards the Buchenwald camp, the Nazis fled, and the concentration camp survivors gathered up the weapons and took control of the camp by 3:15 p.m. The Buchenwald clock tower remains forever fixed at 3:15 p.m., as this was when the camp was liberated (Rodden, 2005). As flawed as General Patton was, many concentration camp survivors are devoted to him as they "thought

their lives were certainly over, only to be given a second chance by a magnificent general" (Washington Post, 2014).

Summary

Patton's early life shaped who he would become. Patton became one of the most outstanding military leaders ever known. Patton's learning disabilities (dyslexia and ADD), solid family structure, forefathers, and schooling developed Patton into a successful leader. Patton sought excellence and was never satisfied with his performance. Patton's upbringing revolved around an affluent and caring family structure.

Patton was well taken care of by his Papa, Mama, and Aunt Nannie. These family members took much of their time to ensure Patton had a stable upbringing. The family often read and talked to Patton about his heroic forefathers due to his limited ability to learn. Blumenson (1985) states that Patton thought that genetics plays a role in shaping a leader. Patton also believed that successful military leaders were a blending of lineage and abilities. Patton was not flawless. Numerous faults sometimes tainted his leadership proficiencies, which were of the highest magnitude.

Patton rose to be a fantastic but complicated leader when the Army needed a leader with his leadership characteristics. His stern discipline, resilience, and selflessness elicited extraordinary pride within his troops.

Today's Army would not have tolerated Patton, and he would have been relieved from duty before he had to chance to become the military leader he was. Patton was not born to be a leader, but his life's experiences molded him into a great military leader with strong leadership characteristics.

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Chapter Twelve: The Survivors

The Survivors

Wendy Adele-Marie

In this chapter, we have several first-hand accounts of Holocaust survivors. Two survivors who are no longer with us, but who often spoke to my students, were Magda Brown and Yakov Zakon. I know that they would love to be a part of this project if they were with us. In their honor, and with the deepest gratitude to our three survivor contributors, I present to you their stories, from Deborah, Ralph, Yvonne, and Stella. All three have spoken to my students many times. Following their entries, we have an important contribution on caring for Holocaust survivors from Adam Yunis.

We begin with Deborah, whose parents both survived the Holocaust, and she considers telling their stories a sacred obligation. Following Deborah's story, we have Ralph's miracle survival story, then Yvonne's incredible story of how she survived as a hidden child. All are often honored guests at Oakton where they speak about their experiences.

Second Generation Survivor

Deborah Leonard

I was born in a Displaced Persons Camp, Landsberg, and came to the US in October 1951. The lessons of resistance, tolerance and hope that I learned from my parents, both survivors, have laid the foundation for how I have lived my life and how I interact with the world around me. These lessons have become increasingly important as our country and the world faces divisive and challenging times. With the Holocaust Survivor Community both aging and dwindling, the children of survivors are obligated to continue to tell their parents' stories.

Being a Second Generation (2G) Survivor has always played a major role in my life. I am the daughter of two Holocaust survivors from Poland. My father's family was among the 800,000 Jews that survived World War II in hard labor camps in the Gulag (Soviet Union and Siberia). Of the 3800 Jews from Tyszowicz, my father's town, only 32 remained after the war. My mother was from Hrbeiszow near the Ukrainian border. She was only eleven years old when the war broke out and spent most of the next four

years as a hidden child in the forest and in barns, surviving on what she could gather and constantly moving from one place to another. Of thee 11,750 Jews in Hrbeiszow, only 176 remained after the war.

In Poland, only 10% of the prewar 3.3 million Jewish population survived. My parents were a part of this small group of survivors. Introduced by mutual friends after the war, my parents married in June of 1946 in the transient town of Waldenberg, on the Polish-German border, with the intent to travel to Landsberg, a German Displaced Persons (DP) Camp and then on to the United States. However, as a result of their sponsor in the US dying, they were forced to spend five years in Germany in four different DP Camps. They did not arrive in the US until October 1951.

There is much to talk about my parents' survival story during the war. However, of late, I realized that there is an equally amazing story of the resilience, hope, and optimism that are part of their story in the DP camps and their arrival in the United States. My parents, like other survivors, used their time in the DP Camps to start new families, have children and celebrate Shabbat and

Jewish holidays. All the DP camps had schools (for both children and adults), synagogues, theatres, newspapers and libraries. These resilient people were doing their very best to lead normal lives. Keep in mind that some of these DP camps had been Nazi concentration camps.

In October 1951, when my parents finally arrived in the US, their "hit the ground running" attitude followed them. They got jobs, sent their kids to school and immediately became active members in their communities, including going to night school to learn English and become American citizens. My father worked extremely hard and eventually became a business owner.

The lessons from my parents' lives are with me on a daily basis. Their optimism and resilience have especially guided me during the Covid-19 pandemic. These lessons have become increasingly important as our country, and the world faces divisive and challenging times. I also am obligated to raise my voice against any kind of bigotry, including antisemitism. Eli Wiesel's quote is even more meaningful and powerful today. "Never be silent, neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence

encourages the tormentor." If you see some, say something has become a core value that we must all live our lives by.

Survival Story of Ralph Rehbock

Ralph Rehbock

I was born in July 1934 in Gotha Germany. I am an only child and my parents, and I were living a peaceful and comfortable life in Germany.

Those people who are willing to take a stand, offer tangible evidence that freedom of choice and opportunities to fight injustice exist even in the darkest of times. Without the assistance of five extraordinary upstanders, my personal story would have had a very different ending.

1. **Cousin Max.** By spring 1938, the intensifying pace of laws against the Jews prompted my mother and father to plan to leave our home in Gotha, Germany This was not an easy task. We, and so many others like us, tried to contact family members in the United States. Some were not willing or ablet o help. Thankfully, my mother's cousin Max agreed to prepare the affidavit of support that would sponsor our family of 3 for admission to the United States. That was the only way to be able to be accepted as German JEWISH Refugees into the US. My mother by herself sailed to

America to Hyde Park in Chicago in April 1938 to retrieve and hand carry all of the documents THAT HAD BEEN PREPARED BY MAX --back to the US Consulate in Berlin for THE hopeful ISSUE OF visas. We ultimately received a letter inviting us to come to Berlin for an appointment on November 10.

2. **The House Sitter**. During the evening of Nov. 9, we watched from our Berlin hotel window as fire destroyed the synagogue across the street. ONE OF THE 1400 synagogues torched that night. ANOTHER WAS OURS IN GOTHA. With THE cooperation from the local population, Nazis smashed windows, vandalized storefronts and murdered 91 men. My uncle was one of them. The Nazis also arrested 30,000 Jewish men between the ages of 16 and 60 and sent them to concentration camps. Back at our home in Gotha, the Gestapo came to arrest my father, but a young Jewish girl who was housesitting for us told them she did not know where he was, and they left in disgust. Back in 1933 all Jews were required to register. That is how they knew where every Jew lived.

That evening we received a telephone call from the SITTER at OUR hotel. “The English lesson is canceled," she said. It was A prearranged code meaning, “Do not come home,” and he never did again. All German phones were tapped OF COURSE.

3. The US Marine. On Nov. 10, we went to our SCHEDULED appointment at the U.S. Consulate to secure our visas, but paperwork delays required us to return the following day. We did, only to find the consulate closed for “Armistice Day”, the holiday we now call Veterans Day. It was NOV 11 THE DAY THAT WW2 ENDED AT 11AM. A Marine guard standing at the gate, was compassionate to our plight AND tracked down the consul general AT HIS HOME. He went to find AND BRING HIM BACKTO HIS OFFICE.

4. The Consul General. Despite the holiday, the consul general returned to his office to complete our visas. His signature meant freedom FOR US. All that was left was getting out of Germany.

5. The Stranger. My mother and I traveled to the GERMAN/Dutch border where all Jews were forced off the train.

For reasons still unknown, and with all the suspense of an old noir film, a Dutchman -- A TOTAL STRANGER tapped my mother on the shoulder and quietly separated us from the other Jews THAT WERE ALSO WAITING. His signal to us, a slight tip of his hat, told us to follow him to a local train track and board a train to safety in Holland. From Holland we went to England where we were joined by my father, who HAD traveled separately, and on Dec. 15, 1938, we left for the United States on the SS Manhattan which docked on Dec 22ND. I do remember seeing the Statue of Liberty in NY harbor.

We are reminded of our responsibility to each other. We have the moral obligation to take a stand for humanity. We have the power, through actions both big and small, to become upstanders as our five upstanders had been on our behalf.

Our community must defend against those who attack others based on race or religion and unite against antisemitism and all forms of bigotry. Sometimes, the simplest of actions — writing a letter to a congressman, making a phone call to support a cause, showing up

to a rally or event, or tipping a hat to a stranger — can make all the difference in the lives of others.

A Hidden Child's Story of Survival: Yvonne Aronson

Yvonne Aronson

My journey begins in 1887 when my great grandparents came to America from Vienna Austria. They probably ended up in the ghetto in New York City and that wasn't the life my great grandmother knew in Vienna. My grandmother was born in New York in August 1888 and when she was 2 in 1890 my great grandmother packed herself and her daughter up and went back to Vienna. My great grandfather stayed another year thinking his family would return but when they didn't, he returned to Vienna also and that's how my family was in Europe when Hitler struck in 1938. My mother was engaged to be married and saw to it that both families emigrated to Brussels Belgium which was neutral at that time. My mother had two first cousins-the male went on the last Kindertransport and landed in Montevideo Uruguay and the female ended up being a governess for a Jewish family outside of London.

I was born in Brussels on April 5, 1939. My father and his brother were picked up on the street (everyone had false papers)

and were taken to a labor camp outside Carcassonne France. My mother's sister was also picked up and went directly to Auschwitz and killed upon arrival. My mother, great grandmother, great aunt and I went into a convent. My mother posed as a novice nun but passing out three times after attending when they came up the aisle was made governess of the 25 children in the convent. I was the only one with a parent. My mother took one child every evening and shared the little food we had.

When she found out that the Mother Superior was receiving food packages, she asked her to share them with the children she refused, and my mother and I went back to our apartment where she became very ill. The local pharmacist hid us in his cellar where I sat on a wooden chair holding a doll I had been given by a Belgian friend of my mother's. There was a small window with metal bars at street level and all I could see were people's feet as they walked by. The pharmacist's wife would bring us food and take care of my mother. We were there about 3 months and when my mother recovered, we went briefly back to our apartment until she found a widow and her adult son(through

Belgian underground)who was willing to hide me. They lived in Audergam which was a picturesque suburb-white picket fences, green shutters, pretty gardens. My days were spent picking vegetables in the garden and twice a week we walked to the local cemetery where the widow tended to her husband's grave.

When I went to live with the widow, I was given 5 children's books by the same friend who had given me the doll. Since I had nothing to do and no one with whom I could play I taught myself to read by the time I was 3-1/2. I read and reread those books countless times-that saved me. My mother would come every Sunday and one Sunday there was a streetcar strike, and I was told my mother wouldn't be coming but I knew she would. She walked 15 miles and never missed a Sunday in the 3+ years I was with the widow. Every time she came, I always asked when the war would be over, and my mother said 1945 to appease me. Of course, I cried every time she left. In the meantime, my grandmother landed in New York on April 6,1939, was met by an ex-boyfriend of my mothers who gave her $100 and put her on a greyhound bus to Chicago to meet up with a friend from Vienna.

My grandmother was a princess as she was beautiful, charming and played bridge; she just couldn't boil water.

Her friend got her a job as a cook for a Jewish family, in Hyde Park, at Passover. She made matzo balls from her friend's recipe which turned out to be like hockey pucks! They did improve and we still make them from that recipe. After this job she went to work as a housekeeper for a widower in Glencoe and that was followed by a job as housekeeper/companion to Harriet Adler Wile who was the sister of Max Adler of the Adler Planetarium and the Rosenwald family of the museum of science and industry. When I came back to Brussels, I started kindergarten and had the first friend my own age. I went on to Catholic school because that was the only neighborhood school. During that time my mother would go to the American Consulate in Antwerp several times a month, but it appeared that counsel was anti-Semitic and made it very difficult to get the necessary papers to emigrate to America. It was finally accomplished, and we left Brussels mid-March 1947.

We brought an orphan with us, who was the niece of my grandmother's friends in Chicago. We went by train to Antwerp,

Copenhagen then by ferry to Gothenburg, Sweden where we boarded our ship to America. It was a very turbulent crossing. My great grandmother crossed the Atlantic for the second time. She was the only person who didn't miss a meal. The morning we sailed into New York Harbor everyone was on deck as we sailed by the Statue of Liberty. That vision is still permanently imprinted in my mind. We were met by my mother's cousin and husband and he took me on double-decker buses all over New York. I got a stiff neck looking at all the tall buildings as there weren't any in Europe at that time. My mother's cousin took me, by train, to meet my grandmother for the first time. It was scary because it was another stranger in my life. It took a couple of days to adapt again. I spoke only French and German-no English.

My mother registered me at Kenwood grammar school where they put me back 2 years because I didn't know English. The teacher was the daughter of German-Jewish immigrants and she took me home 3 days a week and with the help of her parents tutored me. Also, Mrs. Wile tutored me in English 7 days a week and within a month I spoke fluently and with no accent. The

children weren't very nice to me and I didn't have many friends. I graduated in June 1953, went to Hyde Park High School for 2 months and then moved north where I attended Senn High School. I was taken by one girl who introduced me to her friends, and I still have 2 friends from those days. I then went on to university of Illinois navy pier for 3 years. I married in November 1959. I have 3 children: Larry 58 who owns advertising agencies, Richard 56, an attorney and real estate broker, and Lori 52 who is a pediatric anesthesiologist at children's hospital in Cincinnati. I have three grandchildren ages 13-32 and one great grandchild who is eight.

In 1961, (I'm since divorced) my husband and I took a 9-week trip to Europe. I went back to Brussels and saw the widow's son and his family. Sadly, the widow had died in November 1960. It was very strange walking back into that house-nothing had changed except it was part of Brussels proper. When I got to Paris, I tried to find my uncle but without success. When I came back home, we placed an ad in the Aufbau which was a paper geared to immigrants. Within 2 days I heard from my grandfather's brother in San Francisco, his daughter in New York and ultimately my

uncle in Paris. We had a family reunion in Paris and Vienna in 1964 and again in 1966 in Vienna. I went to DC Holocaust museum in 1996 and learned what happened to him. He was on the last transport of 1500 men, women and children taken from France to Auschwitz in February 1944 and was killed January 22, 1945, five days before the Russians liberated Auschwitz.[78] Four years ago, my daughter and her family and I did a family history trip to Vienna, Berlin and Brussels. Vienna and Berlin were fine but because there had been a bombing at the Brussels airport, we had to take two trains from Berlin to Brussels and another train to Amsterdam to fly home. I hired a car in Brussels to take us to all the places where I had grown up. The kindergarten and pharmacy were gone. I consider myself very lucky in my life. I am on the speaker's bureau for the Illinois Holocaust museum which is my way of giving back and is more important now than ever before!

[78] On 26 March 2021, Adam Yunis discovered that Yvonne's father was in a labor camp in France, then sent to Drancy before his deportation to Auschwitz, on what Adam believes was transport 68. French records may have more information as to his experiences in the labor camp. We will continue to investigate.

My Family and Kharkov

Stella Sokolovskaya

According to reports sent to Berlin, Nazi forces murdered 59,018 Jews in the Ukraine during operations there. Bodies were then incinerated or dumped in mass graves. In one such grave outside the city of Kharkov, a ravine called Drobitsky Yar, were approximately fifteen thousand Jews who were murdered on Dec. 15, 1941. Among them were my grandmother Dvoyra, aunt Sonya and cousin Riva. My father also died. Heavy fighting took place in the region near Kharkov, the Ukraine's second largest city. Control of the area shifted four times before the Red Army gained control for the last time with Operation Rumyantsev on Aug. 23, 1943. It was later that year that the Soviets put three captured Germans and one Soviet collaborator on trial. Unlike the later Nuremburg trials, in which war criminals were prosecuted for "crimes against peace," the Kharkov trial, while not specifying the victims as Jewish citizens, conducted the proceedings against the criminals specifically for their part in killing Soviet citizens. Multiple Nazi army and police units perpetrated the killing of Jews and others using both guns and carbon monoxide death vans. Death squads would follow the Nazi forces in order to gather and kill Soviet Jews in newly-conquered territory. Once Nazi forces tested carbon monoxide in their operations, the number of vans in use increased throughout the Kharkov region. By the end of fighting, Soviet Jewish writer Vassily Grossman described the scene at the time that there were no Jews left as every single one had been murdered. The defendants in the Kharkov trial were charged under both international and Soviet law. The Soviets used the Moscow Declaration, in which Allies had agreed that war criminals would be tried for their crimes in the countries where their atrocities occurred. The Kharkov trial was the first trial of Germans by any Allied country and the only trial to take place before Germany's unconditional surrender in May 1945. During the trial, the defendants pleaded guilty to their crimes, but evidence was still offered to both satisfy the court of their guilt and give context for their sentence. The court sentenced the defendants to death. A reference consulted for the above was Bazyler, M., & Rose Gold, K. (2012). *The Judicialization of International Atrocity Crimes: The Kharkov Trial of 1943*. https://digital.sandiego.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1076&context=ilj

Caring for Holocaust Survivors as they Age

Heather Klain, Nora Bergman, and Yonit Hoffman, Holocaust Community Services

Holocaust Community Services is a social service agency that began providing social welfare services to Holocaust survivors starting in 1999, including financial and non-financial assistance. Over two decades, the program learned from survivors and developed a person-centered, trauma informed (PCTI) model of care. This model uses a holistic and individualized approach to service that takes into account the survivor's persecution history, triggers, and needs as they age. This essay will discuss the development of this model, its use with aging Holocaust survivors, and its future use with other older adult populations who have experienced trauma.

Caring for Holocaust Survivors as they Age

As one of the largest human tragedies in history, the Holocaust has had inconceivable ramifications – to nations, families, and individuals. Trauma caused by the Holocaust – and

accompanying resilience in survivors – has been studied since the Holocaust ended. These studies have led to an ever-growing body of knowledge about how to care for the individuals and families who carry the memories of atrocities leveled during World War II in both their bodies and their minds.

Background

Many Holocaust survivors moved away from their places of birth after World War II ended, making new lives for themselves in Israel, America, and elsewhere around the globe. They got married, had families, and started businesses. Though haunted by the past and continuing to mourn lost family members, friends, homelands, belongings, traditions, and more, they prided themselves on their resilience and ability to persevere and ensure a good life for future generations through hard work. As survivors aged, they have faced the significant challenges and declines of aging, often layered and exacerbated by the long-term consequences of the trauma and losses of their past.

The Challenges Associated with Aging

Aging is associated with physical, cognitive, and emotional decline, leading a majority of older adults to require increasing care and assistance to complete Activities of Daily Living (ADLs). For survivors, this decline and loss of independence can be especially upsetting and frustrating given that many were forced to fight for their lives to achieve it and have formed identities around the ability to sustain themselves and their families. Furthermore, as survivors approach end of life, cognitive decline and "life review" can bring memories of the Holocaust to the fore, forcing survivors to re-engage with terrifying and tragic experiences they'd previously suppressed or with which they'd previously been better able to cope.

Person-Centered Trauma-Informed Care Background

Person-centered, trauma informed (PCTI) care is defined as "an approach to engaging people with histories of trauma that recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role that trauma has played in their lives." (National Center for Trauma Informed Care, 2021) It is a framework that "focuses on how trauma affects an individual's life and response to behavioral

or health services from prevention through treatment" (Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 2014)

PCTI care is founded on the principles of the four Rs (citation):

1. *Realizes* the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery.
2. *Recognizes* the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system.
3. *Responds* by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and
4. Seeks to actively *resist re-traumatization*.

Also important is a "fifth R"- *resilience* – which emphasizes a strength-based approach of understanding how survivors coped with hardship and providing opportunities and interventions to bolster the ways they can best manage current challenges. PCTI care is the preferred framework from which to approach Holocaust survivor care. With survivors, PCTI care takes into account not only each individual's background and needs, but also the historical, cultural, and religious issues unique to Jewish people

growing up in Europe and the former Soviet Union, both before WWII and after.

Integrating PCTI care

Under PCTI care, both the setting of care and the way that care is provided are modified to ensure the comfort and safety of survivors. Institutional care settings – such as hospitals, nursing homes, and rehabilitation centers – typically pose salient threats of re-traumatization and are therefore a useful case study in how such modifications can be made. Without attention to providing PCTI care, such facilities contain many potential trauma triggers – reminders of past experiences that lead to harmful physical, psychological, and emotional reactions. For example, institutional care settings are traditionally cold and clinical; they are filled with individuals in uniforms, loud voices, and different accents; they regularly restrict movement and choice; sometimes they require individuals to line up for food; important information commonly goes unshared with patients or residents. Each of these examples may remind a survivor of their past interactions with Nazis and Nazi collaborators, including being in confined spaces and ordered

to move around involuntarily; undergoing medical experimentation; and lacking access to vital resources.

It is critical for staff to *realize* when an individual being cared for in a facility has a trauma history (e.g., by asking relevant questions during intake), to *recognize* signs and symptoms of traumatic responses (e.g., fear, aggression, dissociation), and to *respond* by making efforts to decrease triggers in the care setting (e.g., grant as much choice as possible, speak softly). All of these efforts contribute to *resisting re-traumatization and* fall within a framework of PCTI care.

Though institutionalized care settings are rife with potential trauma triggers, re-traumatization can occur outside of such facilities as well. As with all traumas, different experiences trigger different individuals differently. PCTI care must incorporate this knowledge at every turn, by viewing each survivor as an individual. Someone who was in hiding in a forest during the Holocaust may be triggered by nightfall, while wasting food may upset a survivor who faced hunger and starvation (Baycrest Manual, 2003).

PCTI Care for Holocaust Survivors at a Social Service Agency

Use of PCTI principles at a social services agency, such as Holocaust Community Services at CJE SeniorLife in Chicago, requires commitment and adaptation at all levels of the agency, and is an ongoing process. The impact of services is considered in terms of *people* (staff and clients), *places*, and *policies*. Every detail is examined and adapted to create an environment where both clients and staff feel safe, comfortable, and empowered by knowledge, voice, and choice.

PCTI care manifests in several ways at Holocaust Community Services. At the personnel level, all staff – from front desk receptionist to Director – learn about trauma and how individuals with trauma histories may have different needs or exhibit different behaviors from other older adults served by the agency. Staff are trained to present calmly, speak clearly, and provide options to survivors and other clients. The office space is clean, well-lit, and has multiple exits to ensure that survivors are not reminded of previous experiences in dark, dirty, cramped, or inescapable settings. While some potentially triggering *processes*

are unavoidable, such as the collection of personal information, interviews and assessments are conducted as sensitively as possible. Staff members clearly explain why different questions are being asked and how the information will be used, and they assure clients that the information will not be shared with others. Information about services is offered in clients' native language to promote understanding, autonomy, and choice. At events, staff and volunteers are instructed to be sensitive to survivor triggers, such as not requiring them to stand in lines to register, and not removing or discarding food from the table while they are present.

Service Provision during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic carried great potential to be especially re-traumatizing for Holocaust survivors, as they were once again separated from friends and family, uncertain about adequate supplies of food and other essential resources, living in fear of losing loved ones, and generally uncertain and anxious about what was to come. Furthermore, throughout 2020, news channels were airing stories not only about the pandemic, but also about economic issues and increasing racial tensions, adding to

survivors' worries. In Chicago, for example, protests and associated destruction of property – including broken glass on many downtown storefronts – evoked memories of *Kristallnacht*. For many, these worries manifested in stress, sleep issues, nightmares, and other symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Holocaust Community Services responded at the beginning of the pandemic by calling every survivor connected to the program to ensure that they had food and medication, that they were safe in their homes, and to provide reassurance that the agency would still provide support. After these basic needs were met, the agency increased financial support and expanded remote services to decrease social isolation. Support groups were transferred online so that survivors did not lose their sense of community and had a place to discuss their anxieties and share ways to remain resilient. Care packages were sent with clear information about the pandemic, PPE for protection, and, around holidays, with treats and wishes to let survivors know they were part of a caring community. These seemingly simple adaptations were made thoughtfully, with consideration of survivors' unique

needs, and they made a huge difference to survivors who expressed overwhelming gratitude for each outreach effort.

Applicability of Model to Other Older Adult Populations with Histories of Trauma

Within the next 20-30 years, the last living Holocaust survivor will have passed away. The Jewish social services community recognizes this fast-approaching reality, as exemplified by the Jewish Federations of North America's (JFNA) recent expansion from the "Center for Advancing Holocaust Survivor Care" to the "JFNA Center on Aging and Trauma and Holocaust Survivor Initiative." Practices developed by agencies serving Holocaust survivors are now being adapted to work with other populations with histories of trauma. These groups include minorities in America, older adults with disabilities, survivors of genocides, domestic violence survivors, and more. JFNA has compiled resources with various topics – trainings for caregivers, creative arts intervention, and PCTI care during a pandemic are only a few examples.

Just as American medicine has moved away from the "one size fits all" care model, PCTI initiatives developed for survivors will continue to grow and develop over time as they are put into use with other populations. While flexibility is a key part of the model, the PCTI model for working with Holocaust survivors has set the groundwork from which lessons will be learned and better care models developed to meet the unique needs of many different populations and future generations who may face trauma.

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Chapter Thirteen: Holocaust Denial and Distortion

Wendy Adele-Marie

Holocaust denial and distortion began during the Holocaust and remains with us today. What is Holocaust denial? Denial is "Holocaust denial is a movement that exists to deny the existence of the Holocaust. Deniers vary in theory, but all employ anti-Semitic rhetoric in the formulation of their arguments" (Adele-Marie, 2009). Why does denial still exist? Antisemitism did not end with the Holocaust because the hatred of the Jews did not end. Hatred of the Jews was global, and it has not ended. Denial takes on many forms, from falsification of data, to faux scholars who use their body of work to justify their stance on denial. Denial questions facts. Deniers will say Hitler never directly ordered this, or he never signed that. Also, conferences whose purpose, organizers will say is not to deny the Holocaust, but to "debate" it in a "scientific" context. What belief systems are behind this? The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum stated this about denial and distortion:

> Holocaust denial is any attempt to negate the established facts of the Nazi genocide of European Jews. Holocaust denial and distortion are forms of antisemitism, prejudice against or hatred of Jews. Holocaust denial and distortion generally claim that the Holocaust was invented or exaggerated by Jews as part of a plot to advance Jewish interests. These views perpetuate long-standing antisemitic stereotypes, hateful beliefs that helped lay the groundwork for the Holocaust. Holocaust denial, distortion, and misuse all undermine the truth and our understanding of history. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2019, para. 1-2)

Importantly, for more on denial and distortion, see also the essay in chapter two of this book "Will antisemitism ever end" by Sherry Bard. Last, "deniers refer to the Holocaust as a hoax, arguing that Jews have used the Holocaust as a construction to create a multi-million-dollar industry revolving around scholarship and commemoration" (Adele-Marie, 2009). Education challenges hate.

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People are not often aware of the (link) German American Bund, or that some American businesses supported the Third Reich. Thus, we begin here with Daniel Patrick Brown. Brown is a noted historian for his work on female perpetrators of the Holocaust and other topics related to the intersections of American and German history. Here, he explores the intersection of America and the Holocaust, ending with comments on denial.

America and the Holocaust

Daniel Patrick Brown

"The past is never dead. It's not even past." William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun*

To some, it may seem incongruous to examine the United States of America and the Holocaust together. In the first place, the horrific attempt to annihilate those the Nazis targeted as so-called undesirables (Jews, Sinti/Roma, Slavs, gay men, and more) occurred in Europe and the western Asiatic regions of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). America lies over 3,550 miles from the west coast of France, which was the most western area of Nazi occupied Europe. Consequently, the United

States was safely cushioned by the Atlantic Ocean from the atrocities and mass murder that the Third Reich committed. While today people live in a truly global community, during the era of the Third Reich, there were no transatlantic aircraft flights, maritime travel took weeks, and instantaneous communication could only be accomplished via telegraph or telephone services.

Secondly, America and Nazi Germany were ostensibly diametrical opposites. The United States, a nation that aspired to fulfil the noble principles of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," stood in stark contrast to everything that the authoritarian Nazi police state represented. America was the world's great experiment in representative self-government. The Third Reich was unabashedly dedicated to elevating its so-called Aryan citizens while simultaneously denigrating those it considered to be inferior and/or burdens on the body politic. The Third Reich would ultimately plunge the world into war and the German people into ruin.

Finally, from a business perspective, America was a country that championed free market capitalist business practices, whereas the Third Reich embraced a mercantile economic model that only allowed businesses to operate that benefited the state first and afforded the accumulation of wealth—if sanctioned—a distant second. Although there were no profit limitations placed on American commercial interests during the 1930s and early 1940s, in 1936 one of the Nazi mandates on those doing business in the Third Reich limited the maximum profit margin any commercial enterprise could earn at a maximum of nine percent.

So, how are America and the Holocaust linked together? America, despite its lofty ideals and representative form of government, was in some ways a more racist and bigoted country than the Third Reich. Long before the Nazis imposed their "euthanasia" or so-called “mercy killing” of those deemed “unfit" or "handicapped" in Germany, they took elements of the American eugenics movement to construct their *raison d'être* for murdering Germans who were physically and mentally disabled.

The term “eugenics” was coined in 1883 by Sir Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin, who advocated a new science of human improvement through better breeding. This new approach, which sometimes was referred to as “positive eugenics,” caught on in the United States in the first third of the twentieth century. However, a more sinister side, “negative eugenics,” soon was touted as a requisite piece of the purification process it would be of no use to create a better stock if the “immoral minorities,” “useless eaters,” and “mental defectives” were allowed to continue to multiply and perhaps overwhelm the healthy group. Respected American historians, such as Lothrop Stoddard and American legal scholars, like Madison Grant, advocated forced sterilizations of the “beings with ballast existences” as well as the exclusion of certain immigrants from entry into the United States.

Historian Stefan Kühl’s 1994 study, *The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism,* created a sensation in the United States when he documented the open and ongoing dialogue between American and Nazi eugenicists that continued *until the late 1930s*. This is not to say that the

American eugenics movement ever advocated murdering those determined to be “unworthy of life.” Nevertheless, Nazi social engineers, who were echoing similar pronouncements Hitler had made in *Mein Kampf*, were able to directly apply these American tenets of eugenics and gradually link them to their concerns about the health of the “community of ethnic Germans” (*Volksgemeinschaft).* Just as some American states had passed legislation to sterilize epileptics, and/or "confirmed criminals, idiots, imbeciles and rapists," Nazi statutes also gave public health officials the right to sterilize all citizens who were objectified as “life unworthy of life,” “beings of lesser worth,” and/or “beings with ballast existences.” Furthermore, to justify this law, Nazi legislators cited Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes’s opinion in *Buck v. Bell* (1927) that allowed for state-mandated sterilization, writing “it would be strange if it could not call upon those who already sap the strength of the state for these lesser sacrifices . . . in order to prevent our being swamped with incompetence . . . Three generations of imbeciles is [sic] enough” (Brown, 2019, p. 149).

Hitler and his acolytes also viewed the manner in which Jim Crow legislation stripped African Americans from all meaningful socio-political rights to serve as the model for the infamous Nuremberg Laws, which did essentially the same thing to German Jews. Also, the seventeen legal scholars and Nazi bureaucrats who assembled in Berlin during the summer of 1934 were particularly impressed with the way in which Southern African Americans had been relegated to perpetual economic servitude via sharecropping and tenet-farming. In her study of institutionalized hierarchies, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent*, Isabel Wilkerson has shown that India's vanquished caste system, the Third Reich's racial state, and America's Jim Crow legislation, all share the same unsettling methodologies.

American Jews were also subjected to unrelenting discrimination and denigration as well. Antisemites were found in all three branches of the U.S. government. On the legislative side, many representatives and senators held anti-Jewish beliefs, most notably Representative John Rankin (D-MS). Rankin's disdain for all varieties of non-Anglo-Saxons is found throughout the

Congressional Record during his sixteen consecutive terms (March 4, 1921–January 3, 1953). In 1941 (but prior to America's entry into the Second World War) Rankin railed against "Wall Street and a little group of our international Jewish brethren" (Brown, 2019, p. 37). He claimed Jews were attempting to get America into the conflict. Four months after the United States joined the war effort, Rankin derided a Supreme Court decision that he disagreed with, declaring that he was tired and the American people were tired, "of this [Felix] Frankfurter bureaucracy" (Brown, 2019, p. 37).The ranking senator from Mississippi, Theodore Bilbo (D-MS) was a New Deal supporter who was also a white supremacist, and he was fixated on the idea that racial decay occurred through race mixing. In fact, Bilbo contended that "one drop of blood placed in the veins of the purest Caucasian destroys the inventive genius of his mind and palsies the creative faculty" (Whitman, 2017, p. 77). It may be difficult for Americans to believe, but Bilbo's declaration went further than what the Nazis espoused, as they flatly rejected Bilbo's "one-drop" contention as too extreme.

As for the judicial branch, Supreme Court justice James McReynolds never hid his contempt for Jews. He refused to speak to his fellow justices who were Jewish (Benjamin N. Cardozo and Louis B. Brandeis). Sensing the mood of the country, many Jewish leaders urged FDR not to appoint Felix Frankfurter to the Supreme Court when Cardozo died in July 1938. They feared a backlash. Indeed, *Time Magazine* had characterized Frankfurter as a Jewish radical New Dealer and that to replace Cardozo (a moderate Jew) with a Jewish activist would provide the antisemites with more ammunition—not only to be used against American Jews, but potentially against Jews abroad as well.

When synagogues were torched and Jews openly attacked in Germany on *Reichskristallnacht* [Night of the Broken Glass, November 9-10, 1938], two members of Congress, Senator Robert Wagner (D-NY) and Representative Edith Rogers (R-MA), sympathetic to the plight of the defenseless German-Jewish community, were so moved that they introduced legislation to at least assist the young victims of Nazi racism. The measure, the bipartisan Wagner-Rogers Bill, would have allowed the United

States to admit 20,000 Jewish children above and beyond the established immigration quota. An immediate backlash occurred. FDR's cousin and wife of the U.S. Commissioner of Immigration, Laura Delano Houghteling, stated that "20,000 charming children would all too soon grow into 20,000 ugly adults" (Brown, 2019, p. 37).

Father Charles E. Coughlin, the "Radio Priest," had a huge following as he railed against Jewish bankers, whom he blamed for the worldwide Depression. After Hitler assumed power in Germany, William D. Pelley founded his antisemitic and para-militaristic "Silver Legion" (his followers were known as "Silver Shirts" and/or "Christian Patriots"). The Silver Legion attracted a large number of new recruits and there were chapters in virtually every state in the Union. The Reverend Gerald L. K. Smith was another prominent antisemitic agitator who amassed a legion of likeminded followers. After the assassination of "the Kingfish," Huey P. Long, in September 1935, Smith was left in charge of the "Share the Wealth" movement that the two had started. The two had initiated this program as a means to remedy the economic inequity that they

perceived to have caused the Great Depression. Smith then shifted the organization into a vehicle for his white supremacist agenda.

The U.S. State Department, an arm of the executive branch, did all it could to stop Jewish immigration to America. During a time of when Jews were desperately seeking foreign sanctuary, the State Department created complex and detailed application forms and petitioners were required to submit six copies in order to generate a valid file. To even be considered for entry, an applicant had to have an American sponsor. Also, applications were rejected with no explanation as to why their request was denied. Furthermore, an unsuccessful application required a six-month waiting period prior to any reapplication. In March 1943, the Assistant Secretary of State, Breckinridge Long, proclaimed that saving European Jews was not prudent because it "would take the burden and the curse off Hitler" (Brown, 2019, p. 37). Historian Frank Bajohr's 2003 work entitled, *Unser Hotel ist Juden-frei: Bäder- Antisemitismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* [*Our Hotel Forbids Jews: Temporary-Housing Antisemitism in the 19th and 20th Centuries*] documented the harsh reality for Jewish travelers: until the 1950s, hotel and resort

antisemitism in the United States was so pronounced that approximately 30% of all American vacation accommodations did not allow Jewish guests to stay at their properties. Bajohr pointed out that this was a higher exclusion rate for American Jews than for Jews residing in the Third Reich *at the same time*.

Thankfully, the Third Reich was utterly defeated in May 1945 and its monstrous assault on humanity was exposed for the world to see. Yet, only seventy-five years later, a blink of an eye in the history of humankind, white supremacists, many espousing the same sort of virulent antisemitism as the Nazis, have even been championed by Americans leaders and lawmakers. Therefore, it would be beneficial to remember that after visiting the newly liberated KL-Buchenwald subcamp at Gotha, American General Dwight David Eisenhower, the commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe, ordered the following: "Get it all on record now—get the films—get the witnesses—because somewhere down the road of history some bastard will get up and say that this never happened" (Letter, General Eisenhower to General Marshall Concerning His Visit to a Germany Internment Camp near Gotha

(Ohrdruf), April 15, 1945 [*Dwight D. Eisenhower's Pre-Presidential Papers*, Principal File, Box 80, Marshall George C. (6); NAID #12005711]). The deniers are still with us and some prominent Americans either have forgotten what National Socialism all was about or, worse, its tenets.

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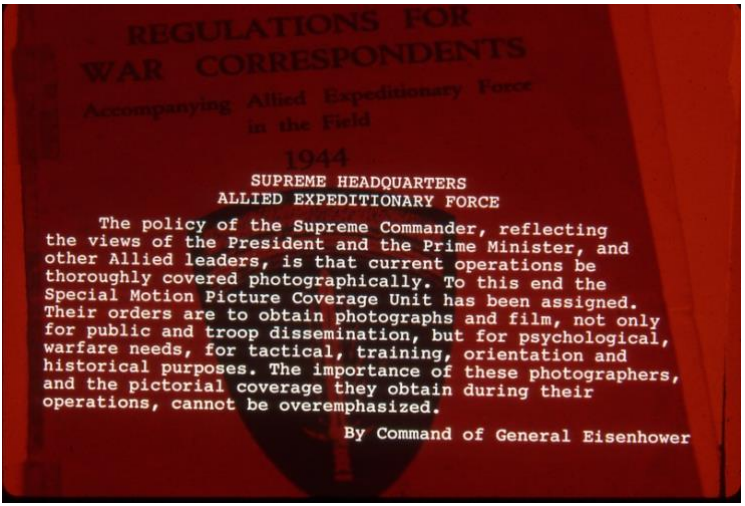
Addendum

Wendy Adele-Marie

The letter that Professor Brown refers to from General Eisenhower to General Marshall is reproduced here. Note that at liberation, Eisenhower wanted to witness the camps so that he could later defend what he saw. Philip Drell also noted Eisenhower's intent against deniers and his requirement that all was documented, in writing and film, precisely what the U.S. Army saw so that no one could ever deny what the liberators witnessed.


REGULATIONS FOR
WAR CORRESPONDENTS
Accompanying Allied Expeditionary Force
in the Field
1944
SUPREME HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
The policy of the Supreme Commander, reflecting the views of the President and the Prime Minister, and other Allied leaders, is that current operations be thoroughly covered photographically. To this end the Special Motion Picture Coverage Unit has been assigned. Their orders are to obtain photographs and film, not only for public and troop dissemination, but for psychological, warfare needs, for tactical, training, orientation and historical purposes. The importance of these photographers, and the pictorial coverage they obtain during their operations, cannot be overemphasized.
By Command of General Eisenhower

Philip Drell's image of his War Correspondents book, overlaid with instructions for the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF). *Courtesy and permission for use in this OER only, the Drell family*

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DDE/nmr

15 April 1945

The Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

✓ BCOS
Patton

Dear General:

Today I forwarded to the Combined Chiefs of Staff the essentials of my future plans. In a word, what I am going to do now that the western enemy is split into two parts, is to take up a defensive line in the center (along a geographical feature that will tend to separate our forces physically from the advancing Russians) and clean up the important jobs on our flanks. A mere glance at the map shows that one of these is to get Lubeck and then clear up all the areas west and north of there. The other job is the so-called "redoubt". I deem both of these to be vastly more important than the capture of Berlin + anyway, to plan for making an immediate effort against Berlin would be foolish in view of the relative situation of the Russians and ourselves at this moment. We'd get all coiled up for something that in all probability would never come off. While true that we have seized a small bridgehead over the Elbe, it must be remembered that only our spearheads are up to that river; our center of gravity is well back of there.

Montgomery anticipates that he will need no help from the Americans other than that involved in an extension of Simpson's left. However, I rather think that he will want possibly an American Airborne Division and maybe an Armored Division. I will have enough in reserve to give him this much help if he needs it. But assuming that he needs no American help, that job will be performed by the 17 divisions of the 21st Army Group.

In the center, extending all the way from Newhouse on the Elbe down to the vicinity of Selb on the border of Czechoslovakia, will be the Ninth and First Armies, probably with about 25 to 24 divisions, including their own reserves. This will be enough to push on to Berlin if resistance is light, and the Russians do not advance in that sector. Bradley's main offensive effort will be the thrust along the line Wursberg-Nuremberg-Linz, carried out by the Third Army with about 12 divisions. Devers, with another 12 U.S. divisions and 6 French divisions, will capture Munich and all of the German territory lying within his zone of advance.

About 8 divisions at that time will be on strictly occupational duties, largely under Fifteenth Army. This will leave about 5 divisions, including Airborne, in my Reserve.

The intervention of the British Chiefs of Staff in my military dealings with the Soviet has thrown quite a monkey-wrench into our speed of communication. If you will note from Antonov's reply to the telegram that

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we finally sent (as revised on recommendation of the BCOS) the point he immediately raised is whether our message implies an attempt, under the guise of military operations, to change the occupational boundaries already agreed upon by our three governments. Frankly, if I should have forces in the Russian occupational zone and be faced with an order or "request" to retire so that they may advance to the points they choose, I see no recourse except to comply. To do otherwise would probably provoke an incident, with the logic of the situation all on the the side of the Soviets. I cannot see exactly what the British have in mind for me to do, under such circumstances. It is a bridge that I will have to cross when I come to it but I must say that I feel a bit lost in trying to give sensible instructions to my various commanders in the field.

On a recent tour of the forward areas in First and Third Armies, I stopped momentarily at the salt mines to take a look at the German treasure. There is a lot of it. But the most interesting - although horrible - sight that I encountered during the trip was a visit to a German internment camp near Gotha. The things I saw beggar description. While I was touring the camp I encountered three men who had been inmates and by one ruse or another had made their escape. I interviewed them through an interpreter. The visual evidence and the verbal testimony of starvation, cruelty and bestiality were so overpowering as to leave me a bit sick. In one room, where they were piled up twenty or thirty naked men, killed by starvation, George Patton would not even enter. He said he would get sick if he did so. I made the visit deliberately, in order to be in position to give first-hand evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to "propaganda".

The Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

If you could see your way clear to do it, I think you should make a visit here at the earliest possible moment, while we are still conducting a general offensive. You would be proud of the Army you have produced. In the first place, the U.S. ground and air forces are a unit; they both participate in the same battle all the way down the line from me to the lowest private. I can find no evidence whatsoever of any mutual jealousy, suspicion or lack of understanding. In fact, I know of one or two Major Generals in the Air Force that one of my Army Commanders would accept as Division Commanders today.

Next, you would be struck by the "veteran" quality of the whole organization. Commanders, staffs, and troops, both air and ground, go about their business in a perfectly calm and sure manner that gets results. I am quite certain that no organization has ever existed that can re-shuffle and re-group on a large scale and continue offensives without a single pause, better than can Bradley and his staff.

Another thing that would strike you is the high average of ability in our higher command team. In recent telegrams to you I explained something of

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the quality of our Corps Commanders. Inadvertently I left out the name of Ridgway, one of the finest soldiers this war has produced. If ever we get to the point that I can recommend to you additional Corps Commanders for promotion, he will certainly have to be one.

In Army command, there is no weakness except for the one feature of Patton's unpredictability so far as his judgment (usually in small things) is concerned. These Army Commanders, with Bradley, make up a team that could scarcely be improved upon. Bradley, of course, remains the one whose tactical and strategical judgment I consider almost unimpeachable. Only once have we had a real difference of opinion on a major question. He is big, sound, and has the complete confidence of those above and below him.

Patton's latest crackpot actions may possibly get some publicity. One involved the arbitrary relief of a censor (over whom he had no authority whatsoever) for what Patton considered to be an error in judgment. All the censor did was to allow the printing of a story saying we had captured some of the German monetary reserves. Three or four newspapers have written very bitter articles about Patton, on this incident, and to my disgust they call it another example of "Army Blundering". I took Patton's hide off, but there is nothing else to do about it. Then again, he sent off a little expedition on a wild goose chase in an effort to liberate some American prisoners. The upshot was that he got 25 prisoners back and lost a full company of medium tanks and a platoon of light tanks. Foolishly, he then imposed censorship on the movement, meaning to lift it later, which he forgot to do. The story has now been released and I hope the newspapers do not make too much of it. One bad, though Patton says accidental, feature of the affair was that his own son-in-law was one of the 25 released. Patton is a problem child, but he is a great fighting leader in pursuit and exploitation.

This developed into quite a long story, all to convince you that in a short visit here you could see, in visible form, the fruits of much of your work over the past five years. In a matter of three or four days I am sure you would see things that would be of great satisfaction to you from now on. This sounds like I am completely and wholly satisfied with everything that I see. This is far from the case, but the point is that higher commanders have learned to handle the important things and we have gradually developed an organization that keeps the nagging details in the hands of people that can give their whole attention to them.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

General of the Army George C. Marshall,
The Chief of Staff,
Washington, D.C.

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Source (credit to Daniel Patrick Brown, who provided the first two pages to me): *Dwight D. Eisenhower's Pre-Presidential Papers*, Principal File, Box 80, Marshall George C. (6); NAID #12005711, National Archives and Records Administration, Eisenhower, 1945.

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Chapter Fourteen: Holocaust Education and Memory

Why Teach the Holocaust?

Wendy Adele-Marie

Teaching the Holocaust affirms a strategic obligation to educate future generations of the global community within a fair, tolerant, and academic environment founded on the principles of patience, justice, accountability, empathy, and honesty. We can empower the learner through Holocaust education to prevent bullying, hate, intolerance, racism, antisemitism, and anti-immigrant prejudices.

We must educate, especially as genocide is still ongoing as I write this book. Once, my students reviewed Genocide watch, a website that noted genocide scholar Gregory Stanton founded. All were shocked at how many genocides occurred after 1945. One student then asked why was the Holocaust only a paragraph in their high school history textbook? Another said that they did not even know Germany was an enemy during WWII. So there seems to be an educational disconnect somewhere. All of us have a responsibility to fill that gap. Through education, we can become

empowered to combat hate and stop genocide before it begins. Hate can be emotional, reactive, and stir up sentiments such as anger and blame. If something is going badly for an individual, or if a collective group has an issue about anything, whether micro or macro, hate can lead to blaming, and that need to blame someone for whatever the group is upset about can quickly lead to crimes against humanity. Education is a preventative.

Classes in Holocaust studies are essential, especially true since there are precious few Holocaust survivors left, some of whom still have not recorded their testimonies, as "there are only 400,000 [survivors] around the world" (Kirshner, 2020, para. 12). The next generation of scholars has the mandate to teach these histories so that the world never forgets. There is critical work to be done to record their testimonies.

With so few survivors left,

> this means that there are significantly fewer witnesses who can tell their incredible tales of survival on a first-hand basis to their children, grandchildren, Holocaust organizations, school assemblies, journalists, and

> historians. Once they are gone, their voices will forever be stilled, and the Holocaust will gradually fade into the vast stillness and dimness of obscurity. (Kirshner, 2020, para. 7)

In 2018, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany contracted a survey to determine what Millennials (18-34) knew about the Holocaust, noting that "the issue is that it is receding from memory" (Kirshner, 2020, para. 10). Few even knew what the word Holocaust meant, which is disconcerting, especially given the current rise of antisemitism, racism, and terror attacks against people, religious houses of worship, and public institutions. Therefore, more than ever before, Holocaust education is necessary.

To know how to recognize historical constructs of bullying, hate, indifference, and intolerance, provides educators with tools to empower their students (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2020). Becoming educated in genocide and understanding what bullying, hate and more lead to, Holocaust instruction presents both student and instructor with a multi-

perspective framework to present an ethical imperative to why Holocaust education matters.

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Bringing the Past to the Present

Chelsea Halling-Nye

The global pandemic has forever changed education. As Chelsea Halling-Nye writes in her abstract,

> In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, many museums, including the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, moved all resources and trainings online. Through these new virtual offerings, teachers and students have the opportunity to continue to receive high-quality information and content without having to step through the doors of the building. Museums empower and educate audiences to learn from the past and strive for a better future.

Here, Halling-Nye explains the importance and the role of museums in education.

All my life, I have loved history. Even as a young child, I would dig through the "big kid books" on my parents' bookshelves, studying the grainy black and white photographs and trying to make sense of the complicated words. As I got older, I craved trips to libraries, galleries, planetariums, historical sites, and

museums, but as I lived in a rural farming community on the Utah/Idaho border, most of these types of institutions were hours away. I dreamed of visiting Washington, DC and exploring the wealth of history there. It wasn't until my senior year of high school that I finally had the opportunity to visit DC and explore the places that until then I had only read about.

I never imagined then that over a decade later I'd be living in DC and working at one of the museums that impacted me most deeply, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. I am honored to be able to work at this remarkable institution and help share its lessons and resources with teachers and knowledge-hungry students. Even if they have never been through the doors of the Museum, we strive to make the content as available and accessible as possible to anyone who seeks more information.

The Museum's website explains more about the development and history of the institution:

> On November 1, 1978, President Jimmy Carter established the President's Commission on the Holocaust, chaired by author and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. The

> Commission submitted a report to President Carter on September 27, 1979, recommending the establishment of a memorial with three main components: a national Holocaust memorial/museum, an educational foundation, and a Committee on Conscience. In 1980, the United States Congress unanimously voted to form the United States Holocaust Memorial Council. Its mandate was the creation of a living memorial to the 6 million Jews and millions of other victims who perished during the Holocaust. (ushmm.org, n.d.)

While the events of the Holocaust happened on the other side of the world over half a century ago, the lessons and history transcend location and time.

The Museum strives to show its visitors the human cost of the Holocaust – that every victim and survivor had families, dreams, hopes, and fears. They were unique individuals, all living their own journey and experience. By turning an incomprehensible number – six million – into individual faces and stories, it aims to bring humanity and dignity back to every victim. My team,

Education Initiatives, works hard to ensure that teachers and students have access to the Museum's rich library of content and feel confident as they navigate Holocaust history. Whether you are a new student to this history or a well-seasoned educator, we have resources for you.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Museum staff quickly realized that our resources needed to be more readily available online. The website ushmm.org/teach contains lessons, bibliographies, videos, podcast links, virtual tours, posters, online exhibits, and more, so even while the Museum is closed to the public, visitors can still experience aspects of the Museum remotely and learn more about our foundational lessons. We also knew that teachers still needed to have access to our trainings, even if in a virtual setting. For example, in 2020, we hosted the Belfer National Conference for Educators online. While this conference typically hosts around 250 teachers in-person, we were able to reach over 1000 teachers, administrators, professors, education students, and more by holding it virtually, allowing us to share

pedagogy, lessons, and training with three times the number of attendees we typically can reach in a single year.

The Holocaust Museum, and indeed all museums, are critical institutions in society today. They collect, conserve, and display irreplaceable artifacts, perform valuable research, discover and share untold stories, and educate audiences. Museums help provide tangible links to history and keep stories from being lost. Even when museum doors are closed, resources, online collections records, virtual tours, and trainings allow anyone with a hunger to learn and explore the chance to do so. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to play a tiny part in helping educators gain the confidence and receive the training and resources they need to teach the next generation of students about the moral and spiritual questions raised by the history of the Holocaust and to humanize and preserve the memories of those who died.

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www.ushmm.org.

https://www.ushmm.org/information/about-the-museum/presidents-commission

Here, we have one of the most interesting entries in this text. The author, Emily Minerof, developed a unique way to teach the Holocaust via a podcast during the COVID-10 pandemic. It started out as a project for my class on the History of Nazi Germany but developed into a unique instructional way to share history. I am proud of how Emily transformed this project into something very different for Holocaust education.

Women and the Holocaust: **Podcast Transcript**

Emily Minerof

Hello and welcome to COVID N' College, a podcast by your host: me, Emily Minerof, a college student during the COVID times. I initially made this podcast as an one-and-done type of thing as a project for my Chemistry class. Long story short, it didn't have much to do with Chemistry. However, I found this platform as a really interesting way to convey information to others and I figured it would be a perfect way to do my history project. So, without further ado, the second episode of COVID N' College is about women during the Holocaust and women perpetrators of the Holocaust.

Before I get into the details of my actual project, I'm just gonna talk a little bit about this semester, what I've been doing, and how I got to this point. So, this is my fifth semester as an undergrad; however, I actually spent my first two years of undergrad at the University of Wisconsin- Madison. Then when COVID hit, I made the decision to start taking classes at Oakton Community College full time. Alright, before I go on, I know what you're thinking: "Emily, you did things a little backwards. You went to a four-year institution, did all your gen-eds, and now you're at a community college and you have no more gen-eds left."

Lucky for me I actually did have two gen-eds left, so there was something for me to do and I was excited to do them. Initially, I began taking classes at Oakton over the summer during COVID because I was so bored and at home and had nothing to do, and I was like, "You know what? I have some gen-eds left, I have time, why don't I just do it?" and to my luck, I found History 228, which was history of the Holocaust, and I- somehow, everything worked out for me, but I actually needed a European history credit for- to transfer for my degree. For whatever reason, when I run my, you

know, degree audit, my history credit specifically needs to be U.S. history or European history. So, when I saw this class about the Holocaust, I was like, “This is great! I get to learn about something I’m interested in and it transfers back to UW, which is super cool because UW Madison is really picky sometimes.”

I have always been interested about learning more about the Holocaust. I grew up in a Jewish household, um, I’m from Evanston, I also lived in Skokie for a period of time, so, you know that’s a very Jewish neighborhood. I traveled to Amsterdam and visited the Anne Frank house, so I had a lot of knowledge of the Holocaust, like that it had happened and, you know, very known things that had happened, but I didn’t learn much in depth about it and I have always wanted to learn more. So, when I saw this class, I was like, “This is great! I’m so excited, I’m gonna learn something in depth about a topic that I think is really fascinating.”

So, the class starts, we start learning, and there’s a topic about women in the Holocaust and how women played a role, whether it was active or passive, all sorts of stuff, and it was something I had never heard about. I had never known that women

played such a large role, so that was something that I was really interested in because I was so, like, “Wow, this is just so crazy to me,” so when the opportunity to take History 200, the independent study of, you know, the history of Germany, I was like, “Heck yeah, let’s do it,” and now I get to do a whole project on this topic that I learned about that I never knew about before.

Long story short, I have an immense amount of gratitude for Oakton Community College for giving me an opportunity that I don’t think I would have had if COVID did not happen, and I have a lot of gratitude for Professor Adele-Marie, who inspired me to keep learning about this topic and has been very supportive in my learning endeavors, and also the Jewish Studies department at Oakton because they have so many resources and honestly, every time I learn something about the Holocaust from the Jewish Studies department it’s always something I’ve never learned before. So, thanks for listening thus far, sorry it took four minutes to get to the point, but I hope you enjoy this podcast and I hope you learn a little something about women in the Holocaust.

So, the first thing I really want to talk about is the role women did play in the Holocaust because initially I never really thought of women playing a large role. I thought it was more of a passive role, a compliance role where nothing was done to stop the Holocaust, but nothing was added to the violence that was occurring. I want to talk about how women were mobilized by Hitler to make the Holocaust as powerful as it was. And I want to clarify that when I say I didn't really think of women as having a large role, I don't mean that in a sexist way or a misogynist type of way, I mean that more in a way of at that time in the 1920's, women did not have a lot of power; so, it didn't occur to me that that is what happened. And, in the simplest of terms, women did perpetrate the Holocaust. Women did play a role. It wasn't a question of "did women play a role or not play a role?" because they certainly did, so that's the first point I want to establish because that is definitely a misconception that people have and in order to move on to the actual roles that they played, you've got to know that they did, in fact, play a role.

Just a personal tidbit here, but I grew up going to JRC (Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation). That was my congregation and temple that I went to and I remember at one point, I can't remember what year, but it was very close to the year that the Holocaust Museum opened up in Skokie, so maybe sometime around 2010, but I remember that during the high holidays my temple had to last-minute change the location of services because there were people protesting outside of the temple. You know, the signs had swastikas and slander and terrible things on them, but what I remember specifically about that was that there were women there with their children, like, infants sometimes in the strollers, and the women were participating just as much as the men were and even had the children, you know, the toddlers who could walk participating as well, so that adds to the compliance and the not knowing and more so that the hatred of Jews and antisemitism is still out there.

Now, some people know that there are women like Irma Grese, among others, who were very publicly known for actively playing a role in being a woman in the Holocaust and perpetuating

violence, but what a lot of people don't know is how Hitler mobilized the woman's vote in the Third Reich. In fact, the number of women that did vote is what made it possible for the National Socialist Party to rise to power, because the National Socialist Party gave women the right to vote. However, I think it is important to note that during the rise of the National Socialist Party and the Nazi party, the country of Germany was still in the Weimar Republic, which was a democratic form of government. Once Hitler took over and made himself a dictator essentially, he changed that to a more, obviously a National Socialist government, where it wasn't a democracy at that point anymore.

But Hitler, according to Helen Boak who wrote *Mobilizing women for Hitler: the female Nazi voter*, um, more than fifty percent of the vote was the female vote and it was clear that in areas, in 1932 in Protestant areas, the NSDAP/ the National Socialist Party was receiving more votes from women than it had from men. So, a question a lot of people may be asking themselves at this point is, "Why did Hitler appeal to women so much so that more women than men voted for him?" and that's a great question.

There are several answers to this question, one being he made women feel important by targeting them with his manipulative propaganda, making women feel that they had power and giving them the right to vote. Obviously, if women had never had the ability to vote in the past, having this opportunity now is gonna make them feel important. Another essential piece to why Hitler made women feel compelled to vote was that he allowed them, um, on November 12th, 1918, to attend political movements and meetings and parties.

Not only could women vote, but they could also participate in political discussion and actually know that they were doing. In the 1920's and 30's, women were more or less housewives and what made them compelled to vote was that these political meetings, parties, etc., they could be held in the home, so essentially politics became accessible to women and it was able to reach housewives, which was the majority of women, uh, aged over twenty. What's interesting is that many of these meetings consisted of women's issues, which sounds kind of backwards, like, why would a woman vote for the National Socialist Party if

they want rights for women? But that inherently was backwards. Um, well at the time, when, like, obviously I was not around in, you know, pre-World War II/post World War I Germany, but in that time the climate was insane.

They had just come out of a war, there was a loss of nationalism, the democracy was failing, women didn't have the right to vote, so when something positive happens when, you know, the women get the right to vote and when they get access to something that they didn't have before, that's one positive thing. So, at the time women may have not considered the negative factors of national socialism but took it as an opportunity to discuss problems that they wanted to fix for themselves. On the surface that sounds great, but obviously this led to terrible things. Um, what's also super important to note about this is that young women were the ones doing this. Older women felt more uncomfortable according to Helen Boak in that article. But again, like the current election that just happened, uh, young voters are essential and can make a large difference.

For example, I am in Wisconsin, I became a resident and this year. Wisconsin was blue and I voted in Wisconsin, so, you know, the young vote is important. Not to say anything about my political beliefs, that could be a whole podcast on its own, but the gist of what I'm saying is that the young vote is really important to the overall vote. Basically, what Hitler did is in the beginning of the Nazi Party's rise to National Socialism and dictatorship, he got the women to be on his side by allowing them to vote and giving them a platform to voice their problems like, you know, women's rights, women's ability to be in the workplace, abortion, things like that and he gave women the power to have a voice in politics and that's what let them to voting because he gave them that opportunity.

Helen Boak also writes that the role of a housewife, like, women expressed that the role of a housewife should be recognized as a profession, and honestly any woman at that time, like, that makes sense. If someone told me right now, "Oh you're a college student, that should be considered a job," I'd be like, "You know? You raise a fair point." Now I am in no way saying that

what Hitler did to mobilize the women's vote was right, I'm just saying how it makes sense that it appealed to women. And more so, women felt important because they could actually contribute to Hitler's ideal Aryan race. Women could have children, they could actually populate this perfect ideal race that Hitler wanted, so since they could do something and actually contribute to the effort, that made them feel, like, important and that they could do something.

It was no longer just men going to war and the women staying home and taking care of the children, it was now women can actually participate by doing other things other than going to war. They can actually go to political rallies or they could voice their political opinions, or they could have a ton of babies you know, things like this. And what's important to know here is that in the Weimar Republic, that was a democracy so someone with the majority of votes would have one power, right? But with the Third Reich coming and the change to National Socialism, the way government worked was that however much percentage of a certain party was voted for was how much was represented in the government. So slowly over time, the Nazi Party gained seats in

the government, like they started with a really small amount and then over time more people voted and there was more representation but since the government was formatted in a way that that was possible, that's how the Nazi Party was able to get their place in government and then slowly, over time, take up more space and be more represented.

If we think in terms of numbers, giving fifty percent of the population, you know, women, a right to vote that's certainly going to sway an election or voting process or campaign because that's a lot of people. Although Helen Boak notes that it is clear that before 1932 the Nationalist Socialist party was attracting women's votes without targeting women as a group, but it did not actively seek to win the female vote until 1932 until it realized the significance of the women's vote if that makes sense. So, at first, they were targeting more votes and then they realized that, you know, the women's vote makes a big difference so, "Let's do it!" Just to clarify, when I say them or it or they, I'm referring to the National Socialist party.

Boak ends her paper with saying, “The way in which millions of women cast their vote ensured that women’s rights would not be on the electoral agenda again for some considerable time.” Now when you dissect that, women were voting for their own rights. Women had the opportunity to vote against abortion laws and against things that would harm them. So, at that time women, maybe in the beginning of the Holocaust and the beginning of World War II, didn’t realize that by exercising this power to vote they were also being manipulated into something terrible. So, when the Holocaust started and Hitler rose to power, that wasn’t the start of the Holocaust.

The start of the Holocaust, I mean obviously this is arguable, but the way Hitler rose to power was very well thought-out, if that’s a good way to put it. He slowly gained power over time and he slowly did things so that people wouldn’t find, like, the general public wouldn’t find what he was doing outrageous. So, if he started with the Final Solution or something so terrible, I mean that is terrible but, another thing that was terrible, for example, people would have been outraged, right? But since he

started slowly, people weren't able to see the malicious intent that he had until much later. So overall, by mobilizing women's ability to vote in, you know, the end of the Weimar Republic and the beginning of the Third Reich, that was how he gained a lot of public approval and support of what he was doing, and without that it may have been difficult for Hitler to carry out the rest of his outrageous acts during the Holocaust and that's a role that women played, whether they understood what was going on or whether they understood that it was manipulative, I'll never know, we'll never know, but that's where it started. And again, with Hitler's very well-thought-out plan in the beginning, you know, women getting the right to vote and voting for themselves and their health or whatever, like, that doesn't seem outrageous at the time so that's how he got women interested in politics.

Obviously there were some women who committed very active and malicious acts towards Jews and other target groups during the Holocaust, and there were also women who didn't do things that were so malicious and really acted more passive, but the idea of compliance in this case really contributed to the violence of

the Holocaust and, obviously this is hard to argue but in this period of time, I think it is valid to argue that that women who continued to support the cause and support the war effort, even though it was non-violent, were compliant and therefore contributed to the violence of the Holocaust. Before I get into the heinous acts that women actively caused, people such as Irma Grese who committed very violent acts as an S.S. guard, I want to talk about how women got there.

Obviously, women were allowed to work in the concentration camps and when you think about that, people didn't just offer to work in the concentration camps. There had to be malicious intent. There had to be something deep within that person, deeply rooted antisemitism. It's not some job that people would just pick up because it's easy and it's there, it's not one of those jobs. That's a job that someone understands what they're doing and wants to do it. Back in History 228, there was a textbook we used for that class called *Problems in the European Civilization: the Holocaust Fourth Edition* by Donald Niewyk and there were, I want to say six chapters and they were very detailed,

and it talked about the motivation of the killers, it's actually chapter two, and it talks about how basically there was no way that people didn't know what they were doing. But this was also a question of compliance, so Christopher Browning, who writes part of this chapter, writes that, "To break ranks and step out, to adopt overtly non-conformist behavior was simply beyond most of the men. It was easier for them to shoot. If the men of the Reserve Police Battalion 101 could become killers, what group of men could not?" And what that means is basically, people, I mean soldiers, this obviously isn't about women but I'm gonna talk about the mentality because the mentality between men and women, I mean obviously I don't know but it probably could not have differed that much.

They both committed acts that were terrible, so it was just easier, once you were in it was just easier to comply with what you were told. Hitler gave a lot of blanket approvals to people, so they didn't feel the blame for what they did. They were like, "Well, Hitler okay-ed it, so I can do it," so it was easier for people to just listen and do terrible things than to stand out and do what's right

because that would cost them their lives, and obviously at this time people are going to act selfishly because they want to live. Robert J. Lifton, in this chapter of this textbook as well, talks about how people would basically have two senses of self. They would have their normal self and their Nazi self, and they would differentiate these personalities so that, you know, they were, it was essentially splitting a personality so that you, personally as your personal self, would not be committing these terrible acts and you cannot attribute what you were doing as your Nazi personality to yourself personality.

Obviously, that's a more psychological explanation, but basically what he says is, "The Auschwitz self is also called upon the relation mechanism of derealization, of divesting oneself from the actuality of what one is part of, not experiencing it as real." Later he says, "The numbing of Auschwitz self was greatly aided by the diffusion of responsibility," like I mentioned before. More so, he says, "The Auschwitz self of the individual doctor," at this point he's talking about the Nazi doctors, "could readily feel 'it is not I who killed.' He was likely to perceive what he did as a

combination of a military order designated role." So, when people were told to do terrible things, their mentality was basically, "Well someone else told me to do it so I'm not to blame here."

Now like I said before with women, it's a little bit different because women had to actually marry someone of higher status or do something to be able to become a guard in the concentration camp. For men, it was a job that was expected of them, but for women it was a job that they had to seek out even more. So, they wanted to do terrible things and then once they were put in this position of, "Well, I need to listen to my superior," obviously they committed the act because they were told to but there's also something that I feel is more deeply rooted, and it was malicious intent.

Later in this anthology, there is an excerpt from Zoe Waxman called *Women in the Holocaust* which greatly details, again, women's roles. She writes, "To show that people are fallible and act just like human beings is not to demonize them, but to attempt to present a more rounded picture of responses to extreme suffering." So, what she's basically saying is that it's important to

note that it wasn't just one group or the other, this was real, and this is happening. She later says, "Little reference is made to the Jewish women who, as a result of intolerable circumstances, acted contrary to traditional expectations of female behavior." She here is referencing some women who would put the survival of themselves above their children, and some of the female Jewish Kapos who came to mimic the behavior of the S.S. guards. Now Waxman is talking about both the women in the concentration camps and the women who acted as guards in the concentration camps, but overall, her message is that women, or anybody really, can act in really unexpected ways under extreme circumstances, and this shows both in the sense of a victim and in the sense of a perpetrator.

The point I'm trying to make here is that, although it is a little confusing, the women who stepped up to do more than just act in politics and have children and listen to the propaganda and simply comply with what was going on in the world, the women who actually became S.S. guards, the women who committed acts of violence against the Jews and other targeted groups, they did

more than just comply. They actually committed violence. I am also saying that compliance is violence, but it's important to know that it wasn't just compliance. Women did not just comply; women also did contribute actively to the Holocaust.

So, from *Jewish Virtual Library*, there is a woman named Vera Wohlauf and she married captain Julius Wohlauf. In 1942, he was the commanding officer of the First Company Police Battalion 101. They did terrible things. They did mass executions of Jews in Eastern Poland, and she married him knowing that she did this, like, she married him! There's no way that you can marry someone who supports something so terrible and not support it yourself.

Even more so, *Jewish Virtual Library* says that these wives of these people, of the men in the Police Battalion 101, they would witness all these terrible acts against Jews and the deportation of all the Jews and they would just sit and watch and that was a way that these women liked to spend their time. They enjoyed it. Another woman was named Hermine Braunsteiner and she was a female guard in various camps, and not just camps, she also worked in killing centers, and she was tried for her heinous acts

and she actually ended up in New York, given U.S. citizenship and then it was revoked when she was tried in Germany and sentenced to life in prison.

Another woman who actively contributed was named Magda Goebbels, forgive me for saying these names wrong, but she was actually the former wife of Joseph Goebbels, who was an important man in the Holocaust, and she killed her own children, willingly with force. She actually decided to name all of her children after Hitler by giving them each a name that started with the letter H. The point is that she was a huge admirer of Hitler and then her and her husband committed suicide themselves, and it was later thought that she killed her children because of what they would hear about what her and her husband did as Nazis, and like, they would hear of what their parents did and be so disgusted that they had to kill them.

There was another woman known, excuse my language, Ilse Koch, the Bitch of Buchenwald, and she was married to an S.S. commander and she eventually also became the commander of a camp. She was sentenced to life in prison, but it was reduced

eventually, she was rearrested by the West Germans who sentenced her to life in prison, but when she ended up dying and they found the letter that she wrote, she wrote, “I cannot do otherwise. Death is the only deliverance.” So people were so passionate about their hatred towards the Jews and perpetrating the Holocaust that they would rather die as a result. They would give up their life to do what they did. Margaret White, another woman, she married William Joyce, the leader of the British National Socialist League and then became the secretary, so she, obviously I don’t know why she married him, but I don’t think it’s a coincidence that she was able to have that position as a woman without having married her husband.

I could go on and on listing different women who did different terrible things, who could show you that women did perpetrate the Holocaust and women did end up committing heinous acts and actively contributed, but the point is here is that it’s, people can’t go on learning about the Holocaust think that women were not as susceptible to acting terrible under extreme situations.

In the preface of Professor Wendy Adele-Marie's book that she graciously let me use as a source for this podcast, the book is titled *Women as Nazis: Female Perpetrators of the Holocaust*, and in the preface, she says, "it's important to remember that German and other women during World War II played an important role in all levels of the war, from maintaining farms while the men were away to conducting business for the Nazi regime." Millions were not perpetrators, and it is unfair to portray all women that way, but women's contributions, whether to the benefit of society or not, have been largely ignored, especially in the context of war. So basically, people didn't recognize, like obviously not all women did terrible things, but it is so crucial to not ignore the women who did do terrible things.

Professor Adele-Marie later says, "It's hard to understand why women would do something so terrible against themselves," because at the end of the day the Nazi party did not support women. However, she realized that, with regard to crimes against humanity, there was no separation of the sexes, which is essentially what I'm trying to emphasize here. She says, "War atrocities

cannot be segregated by gender." And it's hard to understand that because for so long, there wasn't any evidence or data or public information that people knew about women, so they just assumed that women did not play a role. And of course, I want to believe that women did good, and there are women out there who did wonderful things like saving children, providing homes for children, risking their own lives to house these children, but at the end of the day, it's, you have to know that gender doesn't discriminate against perpetrators of something terrible.

Given that women were not typically guards of concentration camps, they actually volunteered to do it. They volunteered. And when, like, going back to the mobilization of women's votes, when you give a group of people something that gives them more ability to participate in life, government, politics, etc., that's something that women, or anybody really, would take. But here, Professor Adele-Marie says, "If women return to the domestic sphere, and if the enemy of German man was destroyed, the Nazi ideal of masculinity would remain supreme, and Germany would better for it." So basically, by mobilizing the women to

vote, women were not the enemy anymore. It was the Jews and the other targeted groups. It was a way to change the scapegoat. So how could women who volunteered to do something or married someone with status and got a job become actively violent and horrific in the Holocaust?

And that's really because women, as Professor Adele-Marie puts it, they were in this domestic lifestyle. They were moms, they were housewives, and then, once given the opportunity to do something else, they fully stepped into that role. So, if a woman became an S.S. guard, they would do what an S.S. guard would do regardless of their gender. They would do what the male S.S. guards do as well, and that's the importance of women perpetrators is that because they were women, that doesn't make a difference of the crimes they committed. They still committed them regardless of gender or sex. They did them because they had the power to do so.

Again, with the sense of purpose, when women held these positions, and this is no excuse, only a reason, they felt purpose in what they did. They felt that they had importance, and again that

stems back to propaganda, Hitler's very well-thought-out way to manipulate people, but he was able to manipulate women who previously did not have the opportunity to have a terrible role such as an S.S. guard, or even more than that, to become someone who can because they can get that power.

Another thing is by asking women to have children, he could be seen as protecting womanhood, according to Professor Adele-Marie. She writes, "But sought to downplay the sexuality of women while promoting fertility. He did this by portraying himself as the protector of German womanhood against the incursions of the Vampire Master, which was the Jew. Overall, Hitler made women feel important even though they could never actually hold positions of actual authority or even be considered equal. On another note, as men were getting sent to war, women were able to fulfill the roles that men had previously had and that made them less domesticated, less of a housewife and more functional in society, and that was a thing that women liked. That was a thing that was good for women.

However, the other hand, you know, the other side of that problem or that scenario is that they were contributing to the war effort, which was inevitably bad. Like I said before, women were encouraged to have as many babies as possible with different men so that they could help create the Aryan race, but even though women's sexuality was highly judged by men, this was a way that women could be sexually free because they were helping the effort of National Socialism. So essentially women were given all of these things like the ability to talk about politics, engage in politics, vote, have jobs that were not in the house and become more equal in terms of what they can do that men can do, but were never seen as equal and were used as women for a man's gain. Not just a man's gain, but a dictatorship's gain, if you will.

As we come to the end of this podcast, there are a few more things I want to talk about. One being Irma Grese, who is infamous for the crimes she committed as a woman during the Holocaust as an S.S. guard, as someone who seemingly had authority and then I also want to conclude things. So, let's start with Irma Grese. Irma Grese was a concentration camp guard. She was only twenty-one,

and in retrospect, I'm twenty years old turning twenty-one in April, and as a twenty-year-old I really have no idea what I'm doing with my life and for someone so young and so impressionable to do something so heinous says a lot.

She served at Auschwitz and later Bergen-Belsen, actually just Belsen, where she was later arrested by the British. She was condemned to death and was hanged. Um, she was actually beat by her father for proudly wearing her S.S. uniform, and she was said to have a love affair with Josef Mengele- forgive me for the names- but he was one of the doctors in Auschwitz who, again, did terrible things. To that regard of her relationship with him, I don't think it's a coincidence that their relationship existed and her role as a guard existed. So I know that was a lot of information and a lot of opinionated things too, so hopefully you're still with me, but I want to summarize how Hitler mobilized women and then in turn made them perpetrators. So initially, national socialism appealed to women because it gave women all these things. It gave women a voice in politics. It gave women the ability to do things like work outside the home. It gave women the ability to voice their opinion

about women's rights, and that was something that was great for women.

In a backwards way, it gave women the opportunity to be sexually free because children were encouraged. But in turn, that was a manipulative thing that he did because by giving women fake power- well, they believed it was real but to Hitler, he knew obviously that it was not actual power- by giving them this power and making them feel important, he could coerce them into being for the cause of national socialism. So once he gave the women all of these things, it makes sense for women to be like, "Well I like national socialism because it does all of this stuff for me as a woman and that's good". Thus, women, once they supported the cause, began to volunteer to be S.S. guards and work in concentration camps and over time as they would do these jobs, they would get promoted to higher levels of power because they felt a purpose in the thing that they did because they could. And that's how Hitler mobilized the women's vote and in turn had women support the cause.

He coerced them into believing that it was something good while having them commit heinous acts and at this point, you can't say that they were phased by Hitler's whatever. Because at that point, they believed in national socialism. By giving women rights, they also would need to believe in the terrible things that Hitler preached because that was the only way they could get it, right? Women began to believe in Hitler's nationalist, socialist ideals and that's how women perpetrated the Holocaust.

At this point, you may be thinking, "How can these women be blamed for what they did?" because they were coerced and manipulated into following national socialism. My answer to that is despite the way they were convinced, coerced, however they followed national socialism, these women still did it and believed in what they did until they died. Irma Grese for example, when she was hanged the last thing she said was, in German, translated to English: "Quickly." She didn't have remorse; she knew what she did was wrong. And like I said, there were other people who, when they died- other women who were tried and sentenced to death, they believed that what they did was right and said death was the

only way. Alright, and that wraps up this podcast. I hope you enjoyed it and I hope you learned something about women perpetrators, why women felt that national socialism appealed to them, how women went from being coerced into national socialism into actually carrying out the beliefs of national socialism, and how women perpetrated the Holocaust. Thanks for listening.

Show Notes

To listen to this podcast, search *COVID n College* or Emily Minerof on Spotify, or where you listen to podcasts. Look for the episode titled "HIS 200: Women and the Holocaust".

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Chapter Fifteen: Conclusion and Reparations

The Importance of Studying the Holocaust

Wendy Adele-Marie

The persecution of the Jews and others was known in 1933. Over a decade later, in 1944, Henry Morgenthau, then Secretary of the Treasury, wrote a report to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt about what had been happening to the Jews and others in Nazi occupied Europe. In it, Morgenthau noted that

> One of the greatest crimes in history, the slaughter of the Jewish people in Europe, is continuing unabated. This Government has for a long time maintained that its policy is to work out programs to save those Jews and other persecuted minorities of Europe who could be saved. You are probably not as familiar as I with the utter failure of certain officials in our State Department, who are charged with actually carrying out this policy, to take any effective action to prevent the extermination of the Jews in German-controlled Europe. (Morgenthau, 1944)

Morgenthau (1943) further stated that the general public did not know of the 1943 documents that showed how the U.S. State Department stalled on negotiating for the rescue of Jews. The World Jewish Congress attempted to negotiate with the U.S. State Department and other agencies to rescue Jews from France and Romania, citing specific information about other mass murders of the Jews. Morgenthau (1944) lamented at the inaction of the government to intervene, but when finally, there was an agreement,

Morgenthau cited that the British government was in disagreement about how to handle the rescue of Jews. Morgenthau wrote: “in simple terms, the British were apparently prepared to accept the probable death of thousands of Jews in enemy territory because of “the difficulties of disposing of any considerable number of Jews should they be rescued” Morgenthau (1944). He also alluded to the fact that the U.S. State Department’s Breckinridge Long about-face when it came to Jewish matters was perhaps to absolve his guilt towards not allowing more Jews to migrate safely to the U.S. In 1944, millions were already dead.

In the second part of his report to the president, Morgenthau (1944) titled it SUPRESSION OF FACTS REGARDING HITLER'S EXTERMINATION OF JEWS IN EUROPE, and he specifically cited an earlier reports and cables that specifically stated the "many thousands of Jews in Eastern Europe were being slaughtered pursuant to a policy embarked upon the German Government for the complete extermination of the Jews in Europe" (Morgenthau, 1944). Morgenthau (1944) then asserted that the murder of the Jews was accelerating, and that in 1942, the world governments knew about the Holocaust. He ends his report with these words:

> Judging from the almost complete failure of the State Department to achieve any results, the strong suspicion must be that they are not few. This much is certain, however. The matter of rescuing the Jews from extermination is a trust too great to remain in the hands of men who are indifferent, callous, and perhaps even hostile. The task is filled with difficulties. Only a fervent will to

> accomplish, backed by persistent and untiring effort can succeed where time is so precious. (Morgenthau, 1944)

However, the goal was to win the war then rescue, a conclusion drawn from this and other documents from the time. By the time liberation of the camps began on 23 June 1944, when the Soviets had liberated Majdanek, it was too late for action when the war in the west was being waged hard. Auschwitz was liberated on 27 January 1945, and other liberations followed.

Nazi Germany surrendered on 8 May 1945. Between 1933 and 1945, the enormity of the crimes perpetrated against humanity, war crimes, and crimes against the peace came out in war crimes trials, conducted by the Allies and then within individual countries. The hunt for the perpetrators is still underway, even though these individuals are elderly.

Holocaust education is vital, given the current global climate, especially in the United States. Genocide occurs when "governments pass laws allowing legal racism to become a part of mainstream norms; the public accepts these actions because of the use of propaganda and terror. Consequently, genocide arises

because of ignorance, and acceptance or silence of the populace" (Adele-Marie, 2009). Attacks against marginalized groups and peoples have not ended. Holocaust education is vital in the 21st century, since "with xenophobia, antisemitism, and racism on the rise, there is a pressing need for Holocaust education in schools. Such history lessons, taught by competent teachers, could be an effective antidote to all these ugly ills" (Kirshner, 2020, para. 12). Therefore, education empowers and provides a framework of prevention and is a weapon against hate.

In 2020, Representative Carolyn Maloney authored H.R. 943, the Never Again Education Act. The U.S. House then passed a law to "allocate $10 million in federal funding over five years to further Holocaust education" (Maloney, 2020, para. 7). This bill cements the rationale for mission, vision, and goals of this text. Education combats antisemitism, hate, and racism, as "Holocaust education provides a context in which to learn about the danger of what can happen when hate goes unchallenged and when there is indifference to the oppression of others" (Maloney, 2020, para. 4). Bullying can lead to hate, and hate can lead to rage, violence,

murder, and even genocide. Together, we have a responsibility to work towards preventing ignorance, that leads to hate, racism, antisemitism, and anti-immigrant prejudices.

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Here, in conclusion, we end with a critical submission on reparations.

History of Reparations Agreements and the Role of Social Services Agencies

Adam Yunis

Reparations from governments that participated in the Holocaust consists of an evolving process of restitution for survivors. *Wiedergutmachung* is the German word for an agreement made in 1953 by the German government to pay the direct Jewish survivors for their loss of family, livelihood and the crimes committed directly against them. Since these original payments, several other funds have been created for survivors. The German government has handed over most reparations' claims to the Claims Conference, a Jewish organization which provides direct reparations payments and funding to social welfare organizations around the world. This essay will trace the decision to accept reparations in the 1950s, later developments with the Claims Conference and will finish with an explanation of the role social services agencies have in the restitution process.

History of Reparations Agreements and the Role of Social Services Agencies

Restitution means to make whole again. After WWII there was nothing Germany could do to ever restore European Jewry, and the future relationship between Jews and Germany remained a polarizing issue in both communities. Reparations being made available to Jewish survivors shortly after the Second World War was an important step for German society to acknowledge their crimes and attempt to financially compensate the survivors of the crimes of National Socialism. From the vantage point of 2021, the fact that Germany would compensate hundreds of thousands of Jewish survivors since 1953 is generally taken for granted. Among Jews, the decision to accept German funds was fiercely debated and had an enormous impact on Israeli society.

The issue was controversial in West Germany as well, with large portions of the population feeling little guilt towards the Jews, or if they did, felt their current circumstances in immediate post war Germany should be the priority, not dwelling on the past. Eventually the agreement was a major step in normalizing relations

between Israel and West Germany and created an important model for compensating victims of state violence. Payments to survivors meant for many an important step in rebuilding their lives. An acknowledgment of suffering is one of the most important roles reparation payments can play in a survivor's life, and the funds are a lifeline for many survivors. The expansion of criteria for eligibility as time went on also was an important step in recognizing survivors who suffered persecution but never received compensation because their persecution did not meet the original requirements of German law. This essay will trace the decision to accept reparations from Germany, the creation of the Claims Conference and BEG laws from West Germany, later developments with the Claims Conference, and will finish with an overview of the important role social services agencies play helping in the reparations process.

Decision to Accept Reparations

Reparations from Germany to the Jewish people had already been discussed during WWII and the issue by the end of the war was in the hands of the 4 Allied governments that had

gained power over a defeated Germany: the US, USSR, UK, and France (Rosensaft, 2001). Offices were set up for future restitution claims in various administrative zones, but no new major developments came on the issue until March 1951, when Israeli foreign minister Moshe Sharett submitted a note to the 4 Allied governments claiming a recompense of $1.5 billion to the State of Israel from the German Federal Republic (Rosensaft, 2001). The number was based on the cost of resettling 500,000 Jewish victims in Israel, at $3,000 per person.

In their replies to Israel's claim, the three Western Allies declined to take any action, the U.S. and UK noting that they would not "impose" upon the FRG (West Germany) the debt of reparations payments to Israel (Rosensaft, 2001). The implication being that if Israel wanted reparations, they would have to deal directly with the FRG (Rosensaft, 2001). On September 27, 1951, West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer gave a speech to his government that stated his government was ready to compensate Israel and representatives of Diaspora Jewry for reparations (Henry, 2002).

What followed this announcement, which would be a crucial moment in German history, was the creation of the Claims Conference in New York, a collection of 23 major Jewish national and international organizations, with each member agency designating two members to the Board (Henry, 2002). The Claims Conference had the task of negotiating with the German government a program of indemnification for the material damages to Jewish individuals and to the Jewish people caused by Germany through the Holocaust. The organizations on the Claims Conference Board have remained almost entirely the same to this day. The Claims Conference continues this role today and has been negotiating new funds for survivors throughout the decades. In its opening statement, the Claims Conference delegation gave support for the claims of their future negotiating partner, the young state of Israel (Claims Conference Publications, 2021). Important for distinction is that the Israeli claims bore no relationship to the Jewish material losses that the Claims Conference would administer.

The Claims Conference pursued compensation for individual victims for damages resulting from Nazi persecution, and a "global payment" for relief and rehabilitation of Nazi victims (Rosensaft, 2001). The Claims Conference demands came with a strong caveat. "We are ready to negotiate on certain claims of a material nature. But we want to make clear from the beginning that there can be no negotiation on moral claims" (Henry, 2002). Public debate on the issue of reparations from Germany to Israel remains one of the fiercest in Israeli history.

Supporting reparations on the basis to sustain Israel's economy was Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister of Israel. In a telling statement to the members of the central committee of his Mapai party he claimed that there are two approaches on the matter. "One is the Ghetto Jew's approach and other is of an independent people. I don't want to run after a German and spit in his face. I don't want to run after anybody. I want to sit here and build here. I'm not going to America to take part in a vigil against Adenauer (West German Chancellor)" (Sharett, 2011). This view of "Ghetto Jews" would remain a

negative stereotype in Israeli post-war society and speaks to the divide between settlers and recent immigrants present in the country. One of the main figures vehemently opposed to the agreement was Menachem Begin, head of the Jewish nationalist party, Herut, precursor to the Likud, who also held personal animosity for Ben-Gurion (Sharett, 2011). This was not just a personal grudge but stemmed from the *Altalena Affair*, a confrontation between the IDF and Begin-led Irgun forces in 1948 which resulted in more than a dozen dead.

Debate in the Knesset on the issue of an agreement with Germany began in early January of 1952, immediately Begin called for organized demonstrations in the streets against an Israeli-West German agreement (Sharett, 2011). Inside the Knesset, socialists and right-wing deputies attacked the idea of cooperating with West Germany, protesting the agreement on various grounds. In January of 1952, riots broke out as some 15,000 demonstrators gathered outside the Knesset, some hurled stones and the police used tear gas to disperse the crowd (Rosensaft, 2001). Begin and Ben-Gurion exchanged insults during

debate in the Knesset and Begin was suspended for three months for his “unruly behavior” (Rosensaft, 2001). In the end, the Ben-Gurion government narrowly obtained Knesset endorsement of direct Israeli-German negotiations by a vote of sixty to fifty-one, with five abstentions and four members absent (Sharett, 2011).

Segments of the Jewish population viewed the payments as blood money and did not want to enter any negotiation with the Germans (National Library of Israel. 2021). The scale and importance of the issue is remarkable, as the historical context involved so many emotional and political issues during the first years of a new nation. Central to the critique of an Israeli-West German agreement was that a nation should not create economic ties with a government that not only 6 years before was murdering Jews up until the liberation of the camps, and had almost destroyed European Jewry (Sharett, 2011). To accept money and financial compensation for the Holocaust, by definition, reparations does enter the realm of monetizing suffering, and who would receive that compensation was an important question that Israeli society faced only 6 years after the Holocaust.

The matter was so sensitive that Israeli state authorities relied on a little used Hebrew term, *shilumim*, which stresses payment and avoids describing the nature of the payment (National Library of Israel, 2021). From the perspective of those approving of negotiations, Jewish assets in Europe had been looted, and the young Jewish state was struggling economically, relying heavily on foreign investment and lacking infrastructure. In the world we have built, monetary compensation is generally our only way of legal compensation for wrongs done against an individual and a community, this the basis of civil judgments in our American legal system. Israel would be receiving large scale financial compensation for the Holocaust, and the degree to which Israel was a representative of the whole of the Jewish people was *fiercely* debated, as it still is today, though beyond the scope of this essay. In contrast, payments directly to survivors were supported by those opposed to Israel making an economic agreement with Germany (Sharett, 2011). This view resulted from a concern among politicians on the right and left over the Ben-Gurion government

making an agreement with West Germany, even though it did not normalize relations, this came in 1965.

A very different political and social situation existed in the early 1950s in Israel, and understanding the various political ideologies and factions is crucial for studying the debate around accepting a reparations agreement with West Germany in 1952. The short period of time since the Holocaust, the shock experienced by the Jewish public as its existence was realized, and the signs of Germany's quick rebound aroused understandable apprehension in Israeli society.

> Who are you going to demand the assets from? I shall bring a simple example: Simon set fire to the house of Ruben's father and Ruben's father died in the raging flames. What does Ruben do? He might give up the house where his father burned to death. He might go to court and appoint himself a prosecutor in a civil lawsuit and demand that he should be compensated for the value of the house. But in what untamed tribe will you witness the son of the murdered person demand the value of the house from the

> murderer? But in your view, the orphans who lost their parents go directly to the murderer. Not to demand "ransom" as you say, but supposedly to receive the value of the homes in which your parents were burned to death. In what uncivilized tribe can you witness such a disgusting act? What are you wishing to turn the People of Israel into – people who nurtured and taught culture for 4,000 years?" (excerpt of speech given to Knesset on January 7, 1952 by Menachem Begin)

As evidence of the militant opposition to the agreement, the actions of Menachem Begin and other Jewish nationalist actions during this time are telling.

The speech above is one of the many Begin gave in his impassioned denouncement of negotiations to members of the Knesset during debate (Sharett, 2011). In March of 1952, one year after the Israeli note to the 4 Allied powers, a bomb addressed to West German Chancellor Adenauer was detected, killing a disposal expert and injuring two others (Sharett, 2011). French detectives arrested five Israelis in Paris, all of whom were linked to

the Zionist group Irgun Tsvai Leumi, of which Begin had many ties (Sharett, 2011).

Adenauer did not want the incident to derail the negotiations between the Claims Conference and Israel and dismissed the acts to "madmen" (Sharett, 2011). One of the conspirators, Elieser Sundit, implicated Menachem Begin in the plot in a memoir written shortly after the former Prime Minister passed away in 1992. He was summoned by Begin to his Tel Aviv home (during this time Begin was politically isolated, and increasingly impulsive), and claimed that Begin supported something being done against Adenauer and reparations (Sharett, 2011). Sudit remarked in an interview with Haaretz in 2006, "We thought the Germans should pay directly to the survivors of the Holocaust and that the government of Israel should not take the money from them in the name of the Jewish people and buy tractors with it for the kibbutzim" (Harding, 2006). The political unrest of this time is one reflection of the trauma the Holocaust had on Jewish life. Varying political responses resulted from its

aftermath, and these came into conflict during the Israeli debate on reparations.

BEG and Expansion

In the end, even with the protests, the Knesset approved pursuit of reparations with West Germany, and an agreement was made between the 3 parties involved to provide financial restitution to Jewish victims, signed on September 10, 1952, in Luxembourg. Under the agreement in 1953, West Germany agreed to pay a total of $845 million: $100 million earmarked for allocation by the Claims Conference and the remainder to Israel (Rosensaft, 2001). Direct compensation distributed by the Claims Conference to individuals would be paid in annual installments over a period of 14 years (between April 1, 1953, and March 31, 1966). This form of compensation was referred to by the German government as *Wiedergutmachung* [making good again]; however the Claims Conference did not accept this term, and the program is known as BEG, shorthand for *Bundesentschädigungsgesetz*, the West German laws covering compensation for Holocaust survivors. The money to Israel was split - 30 percent was to pay for

Israel's crude oil purchases in the United Kingdom and with the balance of 70 percent, Israel was to buy ferrous and nonferrous metals, steel, chemical, industrial, and agricultural products from Germany (Honig, 1954). The agreement with West Germany had an enormous impact on the Israeli economy and helped build the infrastructure of the young Jewish state.

The agreement made between Israel, the Claims Conference and West Germany was a historic event as it recognized that governments should attempt to right their historical wrongs in the form of financial compensation. All three entities that signed the agreement did not exist during the war, reflective of the large changes to world politics that occurred directly after the Holocaust. Survivors now began their process of applying and being evaluated for their individual compensation under BEG. The Claims Conference also began distributing funds to Jewish communities and agencies across Europe and the world, with a goal of helping rebuild Jewish life. Hundreds of thousands of individual claims were submitted between the 1950s and 60s (Rosensaft, 2001).

Compensation was not uniform, and there were anomalies in which victims who endured the same persecution received widely disparate treatment under the German laws. Compensation depended on prewar citizenship, the location and duration of incarceration, the extent and nature of the damages suffered, and assorted other criteria, including where the survivor lived after the war (Henry, 2002). The Claims Conference continued to negotiate with Germany for compensation for individual victims after the three indemnification laws had been enacted. The last deadline for applying to BEG was in 1969. It is believed there were serious deficiencies in West Germany's indemnification laws, which originally were limited to certain Nazi victims who were in the West by October 1953. Scores of thousands of victims were subsequently able to flee from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the post war decades (Claims Conference Publications, 2021).

Beginning in 1975, the Claims Conference began negotiating for compensation for survivors who were refugees from Soviet Bloc countries, including efforts to extend the BEG

deadline (Claims Conference Publications, 2021). Finally, in 1980 the Conference reached an agreement with West Germany for the creation of the Hardship Fund, which provided one-time payments to victims, primarily from Eastern Europe, who arrived in the West after the BEG deadline. After the fall of the Soviet Union, survivors in the FSU also received compensation through further negotiations between the Claims Conference and Germany, resulting in the Central and Eastern European Fund (CEEF). The Claims Conference has approved over 33,000 Holocaust survivors for this type of payment (Claims Conference Publications, 2021). For those survivors residing in the West, the Claims Conference has approved approximately 495,983 Jewish victims of Nazi persecution for payment from the Hardship Fund, approximately 1.5$ billion (Claims Conference Publications, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the German Government and Claims Conference negotiated for an additional 2,200 Euro to be paid to all Hardship Fund recipients, with distribution to be split into payments in 2021 and 2022.

In 1990, seeking to compensate those survivors who hid, were in a ghetto, or in a concentration camp who did not receive BEG, the Claims Conference negotiated with the German government for a new fund, the Article II fund. This agreement resulted from the unification of Germany, furthering the Claims Conference pursuit of compensation for survivors of the Holocaust who had received little or no indemnification (Claims Conference Publications, 2021). East Germany did not enter into any reparations' agreements during its existence. Under Article II, a unified Germany agreed to establish a fund for victims who had received little or no compensation previously, meaning BEG recipients would not be eligible.

The "Article II Fund" is still administered by the Claims Conference and provides monthly pensions of €580 (as of most recent negotiations for 2021). Applicants must meet the eligibility elements of Article 2, which has certain time restrictions and criteria related to type of persecution. The income of the applicant is also considered as one of many factors determining eligibility. Unlike B.E.G. pensions, it did not provide for cost-of-living

adjustments, and all recipients receive the same amount. The Claims Conference has approved over 100,000 Holocaust survivors for payment from this fund and has paid a total of approximately 4.9 billion dollars total to survivors throughout its existence (Claims Conference, 2021).

The Role of Social Services Agencies

Since its founding, the Claims Conference has worked with Jewish Social Services agencies to distribute services and financial help to Holocaust survivors. One of these institutions is Holocaust Community Services (HCS) in Chicago, which is a program of the Jewish United Fund and is administered under CJE SeniorLife, a larger elder care organization. The Claims Conference provides Social Welfare funds for survivors in 47 countries through partnerships with local social service organizations. Social Welfare funds are distinct from persecution-based reparations, social welfare funds are awarded to social services agencies to provide services to a survivor community. The Claims Conference annually and meticulously negotiates with

German government on the amount of Social Welfare funds awarded to agencies.

HCS serves over 1,900 Holocaust Survivors living in Illinois with financial, functional and psychosocial assistance. Beyond conducting comprehensive assessments to determine need for financial assistance for food, medication, and homecare, HCS also helps with one-time emergency needs, transportation, and provides support groups, wellness classes, social events, education and professional training, and restitution and reparations assistance. During evaluations, care managers take down a persecution history of new clients, review their compensation, and then work with the survivor and their family to evaluate options for potentially eligible funds, and compile their story, and help file claims or appeals. Many survivors were children during the war, so help in researching the conditions of place and time is extremely important when memories and documentation are lacking.

Most of the clients Holocaust Community Services serve receive reparations from one of the two funds administrated by the Claims Conference. As outlined above, the Article 2 fund, agreed

to in 1990, was designated for survivors who were in camps, ghettos, living in hiding or under false identity, while the Hardship Fund, agreed to in 1980, is for those survivors who fled, hid or suffered other persecution by the Nazis. The Child Survivor Fund, negotiated in 2015, is also administered by Claims Conference and provides an additional one-time compensation to those who were children during the war (defined as being born in 1928 or later) and suffered similar persecution as required for approval by the Article 2 Fund. HCS also aids in the application process and handling of funds directly administered by the German Government, but not through Claims Conference. These pension programs include a "ghetto work pension" called ZRBG, a slave labor fund (negotiated in 2000 in order to indemnify German corporations such as BMW for their use of slave labor) and management of ongoing BEG pensions. When negotiations result in the expansion of criteria, it is the role of social services agencies to reach out and inform the community of survivors and help coordinate the application and approval process.

There are compensation and pension programs not under control of the Claims Conference or the German government. Pension programs and Holocaust reparations programs offered by other European states to survivors living abroad only developed after most of the survivors had passed away, many of the changes happening within the past decade. A complete summary of these programs is out of scope for this paper but there has been a great disparity in how non-German, (including Austrian) countries have compensated victims of the Holocaust. This has been especially true for victims living abroad, most of whom were not German but whose only recourse for compensation for their suffering during the Holocaust was through the German government or the Claims Conference and their negotiations.

Recent compensation opportunities have also often had a limited time window for application. In 2015, after years of failed attempts by survivors living in United States to sue the French state railway SNCF, the French government agreed to a 60$ million fund, available to direct family members, spouses or children of victims who had been transported to their deaths on

SNCF trains (BBC, 2014). The SNCF was in the middle of bidding on U.S. rail contracts during this time, and the agreement indemnified the SNCF from further legal claims by U.S. survivors (BBC, 2014). The program offered comparably large sums of direct payments, successful applicants receiving approximately 100,000$, and was only open for application for 2 years. In 2018, the Claims Conference negotiated a one-time payment of 200$ to be paid to Jewish victims who lived under the Romanian regime between 1937-1944, the window for applications closed in November of 2019 (Claims Conference Publications, 2021). As evidenced, the compensation offered to Jewish victims varies highly, and although the past two decades have seen an increase in compensation programs offered by European countries, it is important to remember that most of the survivors who suffered persecution by collaborating forces or local populations had already passed away before these were offered.

HCS staff has experience working with these various others restitution programs offered by a European state that a survivor may be eligible for. When the Claims Conference-

Romanian Fund was announced in 2018 it was the job of social services agencies like HCS to help identify survivors and facilitate the application process. Poland has a war pension program titled "The Legislation on War Veterans and Victims of War and Post-War Oppression", and many HCS clients have applied and been approved for this pension in the past 6 years. This program was only made available to Polish survivors without a Polish bank account in March of 2014 and provides a monthly pension for Jews and non-Jews who were detained in either a ghetto, camp, prison; or were forcibly deported to the Soviet Union; or had served in the Polish military (WRJO, 2015).

To receive approval from the Claims Conference or any European government, there are requirements in the type and length of persecution. Many survivors had various experiences during the war, some qualifying for Article 2 or Hardship Fund or another compensation program, while other experiences that were just as harrowing for the survivor, do not. Survivors also might perceive, remember, and tell their stories in a different manner, not recognizing what details could be important. An example of this is

helping a survivor apply to the ZRBG (Ghetto Work Pension), meant to compensate those who performed "voluntary" work in the ghetto, thus contributing to the German economy. For Jewish survivors, the thought of any work being done during the Holocaust as voluntary can be difficult to grasp, and the definition of what constates "work" for eligibility is highly fraught. Survivors had a myriad of experiences during the war , but with knowing the right questions to ask, HCS can consistently act as advocates for our clients.

Reparations' requirements are further complicated by the fact that borders and allegiances changed throughout the period of 1938-1945, and this can later impact reparation fund eligibility from various countries. HCS staff with a knowledge of the complex history of the Holocaust geographic and Nazi occupation timelines can evaluate a survivor's story, identify what funds they could apply to and perform research and inquiries on more complex cases. Dealing with European governments can be difficult for the survivors, and HCS acts as an advocate in their pursuit of reparations, limiting the contact a survivor must have

with the Claims Conference or German government, while still relentlessly working with them in the application and approval process.

To demonstrate the impact reparations payments can have for a survivor, the history that reparations can help revive, and the nuances involved in the application process, a case study is helpful. Director of Holocaust Community Services, Yonit Hoffman, wrote an account of Shika Kuperman's Holocaust experience for *Chicago Jewish News* in 2018, the following is information obtained from her research and writing. Shika Kuperman was born in New York in 1916 to recent immigrants from Ukraine, his parents moved back to Ukraine shortly after his birth partly due to his mother's political beliefs and the call of revolution. They moved back to Dunayetsky, which was established as a Shtetl in the 16th century and later was known as a hub of Jewish and Zionist literary scholars and collective farming.

Shika met his wife Anna in Kiev, where he was studying in trade school, they moved back to Dunayetsky shortly before the Nazi invasion. Shika was working as a blacksmith when the Nazis

came to Dunayevtsky and he was immediately drafted in the Red Army to defend the Soviet Union. The Germans occupied Dunayevetsky in summer of 1941. Shika's parents, siblings, and his wife Anna were forcibly moved there. During the three-year occupation, the Nazis carried out public hangings and mass executions of the Jews. A witness interviewed by Yahad-In Unum (Father Patrick Desbois' organization) described one of these executions: "The Germans gathered 700 Jews. They took them into the mine where the water rose until their knees. Afterwards, the entrance was exploded, and Jews were suffocated inside." In fact, records show that on May 8, 1942, nearly 2,300 Jews were buried alive in those phosphate mines. This history is crucial for understanding how the Nazis immediately implemented a variety of ways of killing during the deadliest phase of the Holocaust in 1942.

Anna, Shika's wife survived but his parents, siblings, and their families died there. Shika only learned about this tragedy when he returned to his native Dunayevtsy in search of his family. His military battalion was surrounded by Nazis, and except for a

few people who managed to get out, everyone was killed. Shika, escaped and knew how to survive in the woods. He was on his own for about a month, and then he was able to walk and crawl to Dunayevtsy to meet with his wife, Anna, in the ghetto.

The local Jews and the Jews from neighboring villages had been herded into an area fenced with barbed wire that stretched from the market square to a pond. Those leaving the ghetto were either going to work or headed to their deaths. Jews worked long days with the threat of cruelty and death ever present. The work being voluntary in that Shika on his own initiative presented himself to work to the occupying forces. Anyone who paused to catch a breath, stumbled or sat down was lashed or was shot on the spot. While working, some Ukrainians secretly passed food through the barbed wire fence. Workers carried stones from town to town, building German military outposts and Aryan settler structures. Again, by studying the work Shika was doing, we gain insight into the policies of the Nazis for Ukraine, which was to be colonized by Aryans after the Nazi project of the Holocaust.

His work thus allows us to see how the Holocaust in Ukraine was motivated not only by racial hatred, but also due to the Nazi plans for a new Europe.

One of these projects involved the installation of a waterwheel, connected to power a pump and a fountain so that the *Gebietskommissar* - the head of administration of the Dunayevtsy district - exhausted after the daily executions, could enjoy his quiet evenings of meditation. In late October 1942, Shika and his wife appeared at the home of Iosif and Anna Gavelskiy, non-Jewish family friends. They told the Gaveslkiys how they had escaped when, yet another group of Jews was taken to death pits. They hid initially in an attic, but every night Shika would go down and help build a small hiding place in a barn. Shika and his wife spent 18 months hidden there. They were liberated on March 26, 1944.

In the spring of 2018, more than 75 years after his life was forever disrupted and changed, he received compensation for his suffering, specifically the work done under brutal conditions in and outside the ghetto. The work Shika had done in the ghetto had been correctly identified by HCS as qualifying for the “Ghetto

Work Pension" who reached out to William Marks, Esq, a reparations expert who helped navigate a claim with the German courts. He was awarded a significant sum of back pay and monthly compensation. Shika was 105 years old. Shortly after reaching these two milestones, Shika passed away. Shika's story reflects the broad range of harrowing circumstances and atrocities Jews in the Soviet Union were subjected to and contributes to our understanding of the variety of methods which Germany, along with local collaborators, used to murder Jews in Ukraine. By continuing to pursue reparations for victims of the Holocaust, we are allowed to actively participate in commemorating the lost and to gain recognition for the suffering of the survivors.

We also gain valuable eyewitness testimony to the Holocaust in areas such as the Soviet Union, lesser known or memorialized, which documents death and survival – and is an important and crucial task for Holocaust memory for Soviet Jewry. By pursuing a small bit of justice for the victims of the Shoah, we also call attention to details of the implementation of the Holocaust that are generally less known to the public. The pain survivors had

in their lives, knowing how their loved ones were murdered, and of their own struggle in survival, is something societies around the globe must never forget. The pursuit of reparations for survivors plays an important role in documenting the evidence of the Holocaust and in ensuring recognition and some modicum of justice for elderly Holocaust survivors. Social services agencies that serve Holocaust survivors will continue in their role as advocates for survivors, and in partnership with the Claims Conference, can help ensure that survivors live their last years with the dignity they deserve.

Partial List of Current Claims Conference Funds Available to Survivors

Article 2 Fund

Limited to Jewish Nazi victims who were persecuted as Jews and who meet the following eligibility criteria: Were incarcerated in a concentration camp* or labor battalion during specific time periods as defined by the German Ministry of Finance on its website; or were imprisoned for at least 3 months in a ghetto as defined by the German Ministry of Finance; or Were

imprisoned for at least 3 months in certain “open ghettos” as defined by the German Ministry of Finance; or were in hiding for at least 4 months, under inhumane conditions, without access to the outside world in German Nazi-occupied territory or Nazi satellite states (Nazi instigation); or Lived illegally under false identity or with false papers for at least 4 months under inhumane conditions in German Nazi-occupied territory or Nazi satellite states (Nazi instigation); or were a fetus during the time that their mother suffered persecution as described above.

Hardship Fund

Eligibility under the Hardship Fund is limited to Jewish Nazi victims who were persecuted as Jews and who meet the following eligibility criteria: Suffered deprivation of liberty (such as, ghetto, forced labor, camp, hiding or false identity); or Fled from the Nazi regime; or Fled between June 22, 1941 and January 27, 1944 from areas of the Soviet Union that were generally up to 100 kilometers from the most easterly advance of the German army (Wehrmacht) but were not later occupied by the Nazis; or Stayed in Leningrad at some time between September 1941 and

January 1944 or if they fled from there during this period; or Suffered "restriction of liberty" as defined by the German Government, (such as were forced to wear the Star of David); or were restricted in movement, like lived under curfew, suffered compulsory registration with limitation of residence, (e.g. résidence forcée), etc; or Suffered during the relevant period Nazi persecution in Algeria such as loss of education, loss of property or economic, professional and social restrictions; or were a fetus at the time that their mother suffered persecution described above.

Child Survivor Fund

Same eligibility as Article 2, additional payment to survivors born after January 1, 1928.

If you know of a Holocaust survivor who might be eligible for any fund listed here or has not received any type of compensation, please feel free to contact either myself Adam.Yunis@cje.net or Heather.Klain@cje.net

Special thanks to New York based social worker Robert Lebowitz, who through his website and NGO-

polishpensionhelp.org has helped many HCS clients receive a monthly pension from the Polish government.

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Sample Course Assessments

Wendy Adele-Marie (unless otherwise noted)

Here are some sample assignments. Consult the syllabus or the professor for more information on assessments for your course.

1189: The word holocaust first appears when Jews were burned alive

Read, then prepare your reaction to the Richard of Devizes 1189 primary source document (this comes from the coronation of Richard I of England). Written in 1189, this is the first recorded use of the word holocaust to describe mass murder of Jews by fire and other means. These actions against Jews spread throughout England, with only Winchester not taking part in these genocidal acts.

Here is the link: Richard of Devizes: in 1189, the first use of the word Holocaustum (holocaust)

Citation: Devizes, Richard of. *The Chronicle of Richard of Devizes: Concerning the Deeds of Richard the First, King*

of England. Also, Richard of Cirencester's Description of Britain. *Google Books*. James Bohn, 1189.

After you have read this article, **research** other pre-Holocaust actions against Jews. Stay in chronological order in your written response (for example, 1189 this happened, 1514, this happened, and so on). Develop a few sentences or a short summary response for discussion. See your syllabus for more information.

Nuremberg Laws

Read this essay prompt on the Nuremberg Laws: https://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/collections/personalsites/Israel-Germany/World-War-2/Pages/Nuremberg-Laws.aspx

Then, prepare a 250–500-word response to each prompt:

1. Consider: Did the authors of the Nuremberg Laws write them with the knowledge that the Holocaust was perpetrated because of these laws?
2. How did the Nuremberg Laws contribute to the dismantling of democracy, the creation of a totalitarian regime, and the building of a racial state?

The Poisonous Mushroom

1. Consider what Randall Bytwerk, Professor Emeritus, Calvin University discovered what the Nazi reaction was to The Poisonous Mushroom. Notably, he discovered that in 1938, Joseph Goebbels said of Julius Streicher, the Gauleiter of Franconia, an area in Germany, and the man who published the horrific the Stormer, a vile antisemitic periodical, that "has published a new children's book. Terrible stuff. Why does the *Führer* put up with it?" What does this statement reveal about the Nazi reaction to their own propaganda? Consider the reaction from Joseph Goebbels, the Reich Minister of Propaganda, a vile anti-Semite who bore responsibility for the Holocaust. Why did he react the way that he did towards *The Poisonous Mushroom*?

Stephani Richards-Wilson (by special permission)

The White Rose

1. The White Rose students had no formal authority or positional power. How do you think they mastered their fear to confront evil? What can we learn from them? How can we honor them and safeguard their story?

2. The White Rose circle remained true to their convictions. How do you think they empowered themselves? What do you do to remain steadfast to your values and ideals?

3. How do you follow your conscience? What gives you courage?

4. The White Rose students weren't bystanders and intervened on behalf of others. What are some ways we can express solidarity and compassion with others in today's world?

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Glossary

In addition to the terms below, I invite the reader to also visit Echoes & Reflections glossary at https://echoesandreflections.org/audio_glossary/ Thank you to Echoes & Reflections for granting permission to use this glossary.

Other terms come courtesy of my first book, *Women and Nazis: Female Perpetrators of Genocide and other Crimes under Hitler's Regime, 1933-1945*, Academica Press, 2011.

Aufseherin. Female overseer, or ward guard. Irma Grese, Juana Bormann.

Einsatzgruppen. Mobile battalions of special action soldiers, which often employed women who served as aides in a variety of capacities.

Gendercide: specific acts against a gender, or gender-based violence.

Gestapo. Geheime Staatspolizei, secret police, or a terrorist unit of police officers that was later absorbed, under Heinrich Himmler, into the SS. The Gestapo, under the SS umbrella, became both the state security police and the regular state police.

Goebbels, Joseph. Reich Minister for National Propaganda

Göring, Hermann. *Reichsmarshall*, Marshal of the Empire, and head of the Luftwaffe, he signed off on the Final Solution.

Häftling. Prisoner.

Helferinnen. Women who worked as aides, assistants, guards, or helpers.

Heydrich, Reinhard. *SS Obergruppenführer.* Coordinator of the Final Solution.

Himmler, Heinrich. *Reichsführer* (Head of the SS).

Hitler, Adolf. Leader (*Führer*) of Germany.

Killing Centers: Formerly known as extermination camp, the six killing centers were in Nazi-occupied Poland. They were: Auschwitz, Belzec, Chelmo, Majdanek, Sobibor, and Treblinka.

Nazism. Fascist system of power led by Adolf Hitler, 1933-1945.

Nazi Women's League (NS-*Frauenschaft*) NSDAP organization for women.

NSDAP. Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, the National Socialist German Workers Party.

Oberaufseherin. Female head overseer, e.g., Dorothea (Theodora) Binz, Maria Mandl.

***Schutzstaffel* (SS)**. Protective Squadron. Established in 1925, the SS remained a division of the Nazi party until 1933, when it became an important part of the bureaucracy of the Third Reich. Heinrich Himmler was Hitler's *Reichsführer-SS* and was the architect of the complex SS hierarchy. Himmler was also later in charge of all police. It was under his direction that the SS grew into several different police units, including the unit that would be in charge of the concentration camps and killing centers, the SS *Totenkopfverbände* [SS Death Head Special Units].

Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) the headquarters of the Commander of Allied Forces from 1943 to the end of World War Two.

Sturmabteilung (SA) [Stormtroopers, Brown Shirts]

Totenkopfverbände. SS Death Head Special Units. Theodor Eicke was the Commander of these units.

Volksgemeinschaft. "People's community," term defined the Nazi construction of community.

Weltanschauung [ideological world outlook]. Especially used to describe Hitler's ideology. In order to find acceptance for their anti-Semitic policies, Hitler and his top Nazis needed a way to influence and convince the public, in a twisted form of social Darwinism, that unless the world was rid of Jews, the entire human race would suffer. Hence, Hitler appointed Goebbels as the man responsible for creating, administering, and supervising propaganda to spread Nazi *Weltanschauung*.

Suggestions for Further Research

Here are resources recommended for additional research. Sometimes, denial websites mask as legitimate websites; please do not hesitate to reach to your professor for clarification on websites.

1. **The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM)** has a search function for Holocaust-related research: https://collections.ushmm.org/search/

2. **Holocaust Education and Archive Research Team (HEART)** has tremendous resources: http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/toc.html

3. **The International Institute for Holocaust Research** through Yad Vashem is internationally renowned for its research and information: https://www.yadvashem.org/research.html

4. **Holocaust Memorial Center** in Michigan has a database of valuable sites: https://www.holocaustcenter.org/visit/library-archive/web-resources/

5. **Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center** (IHMEC) is based in Skokie, IL., and is a critical resource for our community: https://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org

6. **Holocaust Educational Foundation at Northwestern University** is an invaluable resource and start with this page: https://hef.northwestern.edu/resources/index.html

7. **Echoes & Reflections** is a very important resource and a contributor to this text. Visit the site for lesson plans to videos and much more: https://echoesandreflections.org/

Postscript by Ellie Pearlman

Understanding the past is key to changing the future: why Holocaust education matters

Ellie Pearlman

The following focuses on why studying and remembering the Holocaust and other genocides is of dire importance. Understanding the past is key to changing the future. Education is key to this process. We must acknowledge, examine, and grow from our past mistakes to not see such atrocities again. Yom Kippur, the Jewish New Year, is the time when Jews acknowledge the year's shortcomings and ask for forgiveness. We recall our ancestors during a memorial service called Yizkor (Hebrew for "remember"), during which we bring light into the world by lighting a candle or turning on a Yahrzeit light (memorial lightbulb) which sits on our synagogue's walls, our way of bringing our family members' light back into our world. We ask God to remember those who are no longer with us, whether executed or departed. When we recite Yizkor, we renew and strengthen the connection between our loved ones and us. Regardless of if my family was decimated during the Holocaust or

escaped the violence of antisemitism, we are all connected and afflicted by the millions of Jews and other marginalized groups that perished during the Holocaust.

Holocaust and genocide education goes far beyond learning the historical significance of affection. Holocaust and genocide education leads to an intersectional understanding of ethics and the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping. It can be used as a platform to encourage tolerance of diversity in a pluralistic society and for nurturing and protecting democratic values and institutions. The lessons derived from the Holocaust and other past genocides are worth studying and understanding to reflect on and connect to our present critically. Knowledge is our call to action. Knowledge is the most powerful tool to build a world where everyone can feel free and comfortable to exist, be free, safe, and comfortable to *live*.

A long-held tradition among Jews is the hectic banter, furious debate, and questioning of everything. Teachers function as question provokers, truth-seekers, and advocates of justice. They can recognize how justice in one community is a threat to justice in

every community. We have a civic responsibility to educate ourselves and our children about the Holocaust and the many other horrible genocides that have taken place throughout our history. We must acknowledge them, examine them, and discuss them. History is doomed to be repeated if new generations are not encouraged to learn it.

The concept of Yizkor and remembrance is so deeply embedded in the Jewish culture that it manifests in many ways. When Yizkor is said, all of a synagogue's Yahrzeit lights are lit. I remember skipping down the long hallway of my temple many times, all of the Yahrzeit lights glimmering on the walls around me like fireflies. The lights symbolize the souls of my ancestors, reminding me that even when we are gone, the generations to follow will never forget. Similarly, this is why Holocaust and genocide education matters. Education will serve as a reminder and a lesson of the universal consequences of naked prejudice and unchecked hate. If education and remembrance are abandoned, history is sure to repeat itself. We must forgive but never forget.

About the Author and Editor

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misuse of science in social contexts to prevent such tragedies from occurring again. Dr. Levi Blumer's professional interests include innovative active learning and critical thinking approaches in the biology classroom, civic engagement and service learning in higher education, holistic student support, and matters relating to inclusion, accessibility, recruitment and retention of underrepresented students in STEM fields.

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Yonit Hoffman, Ph.D., has served as the Director of Holocaust Community Services (HCS) since 2014. She oversees all program development and service provision for nearly 2,000 Holocaust survivors, supervises clinical, care management and administrative staff, and provides direct services and support groups for survivors and their families. She has served as a key facilitator in establishing community partnerships to build resources and capacity to support survivors. Dr. Hoffman has conducted numerous national and community education and trainings for professionals, lay leaders and caregivers on person-centered, trauma-informed care and the special needs of aging Holocaust survivors. Dr. Hoffman received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Case Western Reserve University, and her prior clinical work centered on trauma, loss and under-served populations in Ohio, New York, New Jersey, and Illinois. Her clinical research included studies on resilience and identity in Holocaust survivors and their descendants, which she has presented and published both nationally and internationally. Dr. Hoffman is a second and third generation descendant of Holocaust survivors and victims.

Peter Hudis, Ph.D., is Professor of Humanities and Philosophy at Oakton Community College and author of *Marx's Concept of the*

Alternative to Capitalism (Brill, 2012) and *Frantz Fanon: Philosopher of the Barricades* (Pluto Press, 2015). He co-edited *The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx, by Raya Dunayevskaya*, *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader*, and *The Letters of Rosa Luxem*burg. He is General Editor of *The Complete Works of Luxemburg*, a forthcoming 17-volume collection; he has edited Volume I (*Economic Writings 1*) and co-edited Volumes II (*Economic Writings 2*), III *Political Writings I*) and IV (*Political Writings 2*).

Ameen Khan is currently a student at DePaul University. Before transferring to DePaul, he began his post-secondary education at Oakton Community College. During his time at Oakton, he took a variety of different courses that allowed him to get a better understanding of the world through different perspectives. After his first year at Oakton Community College, he was admitted into the Honors program at the institution. One of the first honors courses that he took at Oakton Community College was *History of the Holocaust*. In Ameen's own words: "this Holocaust course was, without a doubt, my favorite and one that I will never forget. It was during this course that I was introduced to Philip Drell, a man from my neighborhood, who was a great photographer and liberator. His photographs tell the profound story of life in Dachau during the Holocaust. In 2019, I had the honor and privilege of presenting a memorial exhibit on Philip Drell at Oakton Community College."

Heather Klain serves as Reparations Coordinator and Administrative Coordinator at Holocaust Community Services. She joined the HCS team full-time in 2016 after serving a year as an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer with us. Among many other responsibilities, Heather trains HCS volunteers who serve in many roles, such as making Friendly Visits and Calls, to providing assistance at events and with office work. She has also screened and assisted over 250 Holocaust survivors and families to obtain reparations benefits and/or program services as needed and has become the program's resident expert in reparations and restitution benefits. After earning a bachelor's degree in psychology and

sociology from Northern Illinois University, she narrowed her focus from genocide prevention work to Holocaust scholarship, education, and survivor services.

Phyllis Lassner, Ph.D., is Professor Emerita at Northwestern University. Her publications include studies of interwar, World War II, and postwar women writers, including two books on the Anglo-Irish writer Elizabeth Bowen, *British Women Writers of World War II, Colonial Strangers: Women Writing the End of the British Empire,* and *Anglo-Jewish Women Writing the Holocaust.* She co-edited the volumes *Antisemitism and Philosemitism in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries* and *Rumer Godden: International and Intermodern Storyteller* as well as *The Palgrave Handbook of Holocaust Literature and Culture* (2020). Her most recent book is *Espionage and Exile: Fascism and Anti-Fascism in British Spy Fiction and Film*. She was the recipient of the International Diamond Jubilee Fellowship 2015–2017 at Southampton University, UK. She also co-edited the new edition of Gisella Perl's memoir, *I Was a Doctor in Auschwitz*. Her current publications include essays on Polish post-Holocaust film, Josef Herman's art of Holocaust lamentation, and Trudi Kanter's escape memoir. She serves on the Space Between Advisory Committee and the Education and Exhibition Committees of the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center

Deborah Leonard was born in a Displaced Persons Camp in the aftermath of World War II. She came to the US in October 1951 and grew up on the north side of Chicago. She attended the University of Illinois where she earned a B.A. and M.A. and where she taught Communications for several years before transitioning to corporate America in sales, marketing and product development. Her successful career included major roles in large companies with iconic brands like Thermos and Sara Lee. With the Holocaust Survivor Community both aging and dwindling, the children of survivors are obligated to continue to tell their parents' stories. Deborah, whose parents both survived the Holocaust considers this a sacred obligation.

Maria Anna Mariani, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor of Italian Literature at the University of Chicago. She is the author of the scholarly books*rimo Levi e Anna Frank* (Carocci 2018), and *Sull'autobiografia contemporanea* (Carocci 2012). She also published the fictionalized reportages *Voci da Uber* (Mucchi 2019) and *Dalla Corea del Sud* (Exòrma 2017).

Emily Minerof is a junior at the University of Wisconsin-Madison studying Communication Sciences and Disorders. After college, she plans to further her education in speech pathology/audiology or become a physician's assistant. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she attended Oakton Community College. At Oakton, Emily found a deep interest in learning more about the Holocaust as well as the history of Nazi Germany. Emily grew up with her older sister, Elaina, who has Rett Syndrome, which inspired her to pursue a path of service and healthcare. Her interests include disability advocacy, awareness, and inclusion.

Ellie Pearlman, an Oakton alum, is a third-year undergraduate student at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, pursuing a degree in Women and Gender Studies. Upon graduation, she plans to attend law school to further develop herself as an activist for policy reform and social equity. Ultimately, she aims to join the field of academia as she wants to pursue a life of learning and make a difference in guiding the generations to come. In her words: "to me, being Jewish means living in perpetual reflection for all that has been lost in the Holocaust, the pogroms, and other awful manifestations of antisemitism, and, at the same time, living in everlasting gratitude for the gift of life and the sacred task of igniting the divine spark within each of us. Thank you, Professor Adele-Marie for your steadfast support and care. Your passion for history and education manifests its way throughout the classroom and beyond. I aspire to spread education in the same warm and empowering way you do. It has been an honor studying under and working with you."

Ralph Rehbock used to teach classes at Oakton. Among his many qualifications, he holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Engineering from Northwestern University. He is currently the first vice president and executive committee member of the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center in Skokie, Illinois.

Stephani Richards-Wilson, Ph.D., Ed.D., is an Associate Professor of Business and Management and the MBA Faculty Director at Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She holds a Doctorate in Leadership Studies from the University of San Diego and a PhD in German from the University of Wisconsin-Madison's highly ranked program. Her first dissertation dealt with the benefits of an MBA degree and her second focused on Willi Graf of the Nazi resistance group called the White Rose. She explored the role of *Bildung* in Graf's decision to resist the National Socialists. (The German word *Bildung* does not have a direct translation. It means self-cultivation or self-improvement through cultural activities such a reading poetry and literature, attending refined activities such as classical music concerts, and participating in the fine arts.) For more information about her work and research related to Willi Graf (1918-1943), please see her academic profile on Academia.edu
https://alverno.academia.edu/StephaniRichardsWilson

Stella Sokolovskaya was born in the former Soviet Union during World War II, but before Germans invaded country. My mom fled from the city just one week before Germans occupied it. But my grandma, aunt and a cousin could not flee and were killed in Drobitsy Yar (ravine) which is on outskirts of the city of Kharkov (now Ukraine). It was mass grave for about 16000 Jews. After victory over Germany we came to Kharkov, but big part of family perished on the fronts of the war, including my father. Life in the Soviet Union was hard and humiliating for me as a Jew. So, when Gorbachev opened "gates" for Jews to leave, I did it. I came to the United States in 1989. In 2009, Yakov Zakon and me created task force "Evidence of Holocaust," which in 2010 became an Association. Together with the newspaper *Reklama* we issued three bilingual (English/Russian) albums, or books, including *In*

Memoriam of the Victims of the Holocaust. These albums tell stories about not well known in the west, which was the Holocaust on the territories of the former Soviet Union. When Yakov learned about book by Professor Adele-Marie and contacted her, we became friends. Since then, Professor Adele-Marie invited us to conduct lessons in her class and to the Oakton community about the Holocaust in the former Soviet Union.

Leon Stein, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of History at Roosevelt University, is a pioneer in Holocaust education. Stein was a History professor at Roosevelt from 1966-2006 and served for many years as chair of the department of history. An expert on modern European history, Stein was the first Mansfield Professor of Social Justice Studies at Roosevelt University, and won fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities and Fulbright Scholar's program. His teaching and research fields included the history of the Holocaust, history of ideas, social movements, and nationalism. Stein believes it is important for students to understand that what happened to Jews in the Holocaust could happen to any group. "The Holocaust reminds us how important our human rights are and the terrible consequences of prejudice," he said. "People tend to forget that it happened only 70 years ago." Stein played a major role in making Illinois the first state in the nation to require all students in public elementary and secondary schools to be taught about the Holocaust; he created a state-wide curriculum for public schools and since enactment of the law on Jan. 1, 1990, has conducted scores of teacher training institutes that have provided more than 1,500 Illinois teachers with information about Holocaust education. The Roosevelt professor also has been a leader of the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, one of the most comprehensive museums of its kind in the nation. Located in Skokie, Ill., the museum was established in 1981 and Stein has been a board member since 1982.

Michal Vyborny is from Prague, Czech Republic. When he was fifteen, he started to focus on the history of the concentration camps when he visited Theresienstadt. His research focus is on the SS, camp guards and female guards. Apart from researching, in his

free time he loves fitness and kickboxing. He is finishing secondary school.